

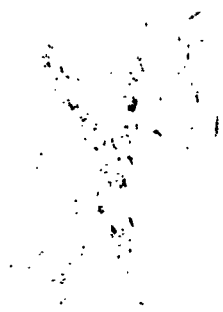


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LEGENDS OF SCOTLAND.







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LEGENDS AND MEMORIES OF SCOTLAND.

BY

CORA KENNEDY AITKEN.

"Land where my fathers died,
From every mountain side
Let freedom ring."



LONDON:

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TO

THE LIFE THAT INSPIRED THEM.



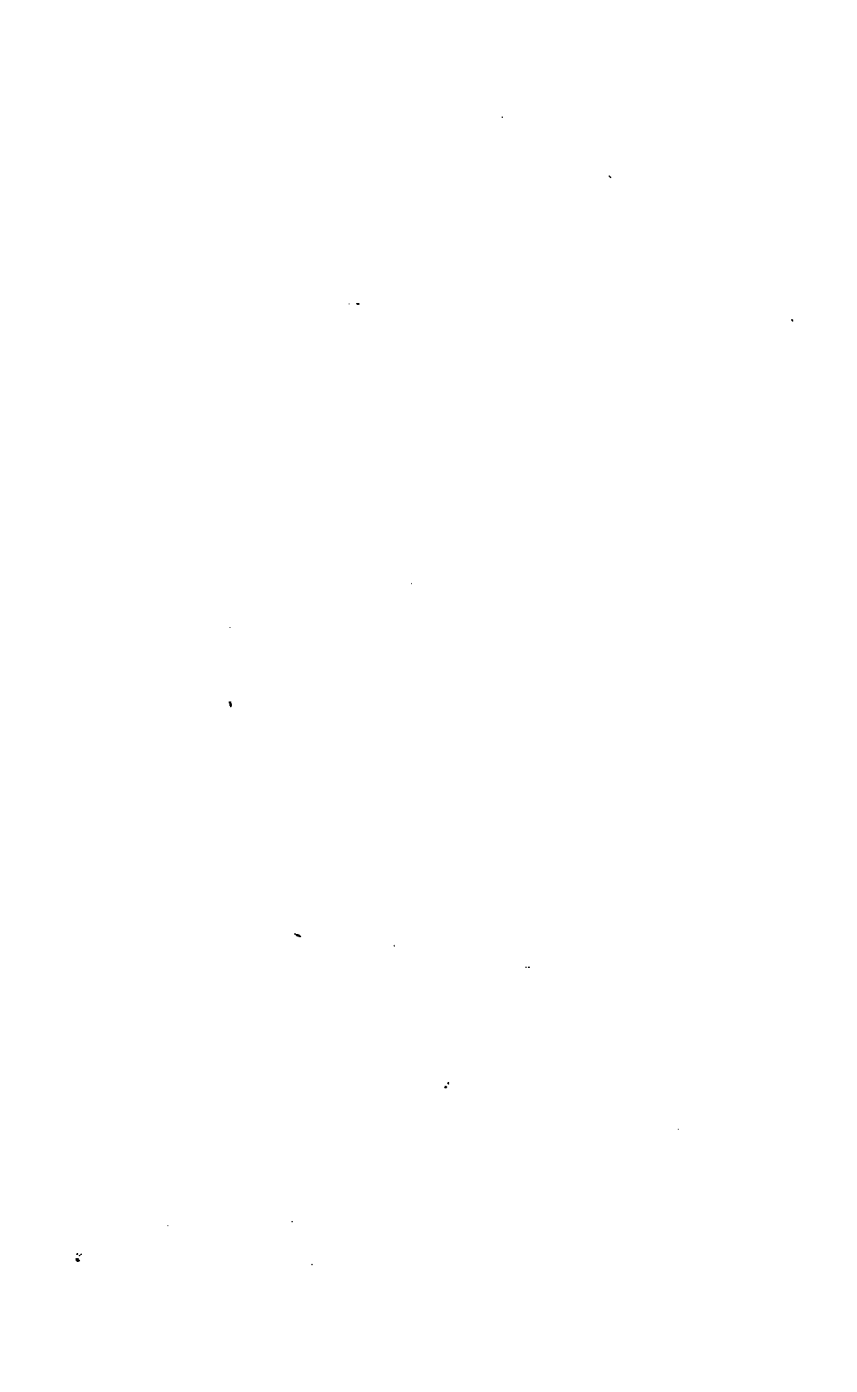
PREFACE.

THIS little book was written during a few weeks' residence in Scotland. Some of the legends have a traditionary foundation (indicated by the date attached), the others are purely imaginary. I could not resist using in most of them the sweet, picturesque Scotch dialect, and hope it may be to the reader even as it was to the writer, a help and no hindrance.

Too many great and venerable souls have sung of Scotland for her to need the praise of younger and humbler singers. I do not presume to praise, only to thank her for the hours of rest she has given.

INVERNESS, SCOTLAND.

September, 1874.



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PART I.

Thoir air ais an tseann aimean !

Bring back the old, old times !

*WITHIN the rare and radiant world of dreams
There is of beauty passionate a store
Wherein to deck a pallid soul in gleams
Of colour and of light that burn sad eyes before.
O, lights of dreamland, burn, burn mine eyes before!*

*In dreamland power lights the stricken way,
Desires sparkle and sweet hopes depart
In rainbow fancies that divinely sway,
The plumage of the bright birds of the heart.
O, lights of dreamland, make noonland in my heart!*

*Upon the sunshine falling o'er my feet
Are soft and subtle pleasures wandering,
And thoughts of joy that blossom tall and sweet,
And winds like bells that musically ring.
O, winds and bells of dreamland, how ye ring!*

*Make music for me, winds and bells, divine
The glowing instincts that from you are born,
That mortal music faintly doth enshrine!
Ring out above me, thro' the dreamland dawn,
But, winds of dreamland, wake me not at dawn!*

*For I would rather sleep in dreamland than
Live, move, or think, or toil in lower sphere,
The ideal woman and the ideal man—
The soul's great kindred—are all gathered here!
The homes of dreamland I dwell in and revere!*

*For therein I connect myself with death,
Divine the secrets that the dear ones know
Who lie without a movement or a breath
In graves where it is bitterness to go.
To them in dreamland instead 'tis peace to go!*

*And therefore will I never be released
From sleep or dream, but ever will have part
In angel company and heavenly feast,
And worship both with passionate yearning heart
In dreamland, the haven and heaven of the heart!*

LEGENDS AND MEMORIES OF SCOTLAND.



A LEGEND OF FEDBURGH.

THE summer had done blooming ; autumn Days
Walked o'er the hills, their stately foreheads crowned
With golden coronets, and yellow maize
Covered their superb breasts and limbs around.
Their naked feet shone o'er the rustling ground,
Their brown hair streamed behind them thro' the chill
Of early air and morning's purple haze.
The haughty sun had not yet 'gan to thrill
His fair earth-love nor eke subdue it to his will.

The sombre Night reluctant ling'ring on
Hovered by many a dainty-curtained bed
Wherein sweet maids, with soft dreams lit upon
Their snowy eyelids, lay, by sweet sleep fed,
As white as in old churches sculptured dead.

Long sighing, and at strife with destiny,
He lifted his dark wings at last and sped
Into the wakening air all noiselessly,
Lonesome and great as eke for ever he must be !

An old brown church.—Here patient ages thro'
Long generations meek of saintly men
Fasted and prayed alway, and joined thereto
Penance severe and penitence, and then
Praise and devotion o'er and o'er again,
Till heaven sent down among them special grace,
Success in preaching with the tongue or pen,
Great power to save the souls of sinful race
Wherever they should find them in the wide world's space.

A monastery by the old church stands,
Its walls arise like wings into the air
To guard God's holy house and the broad lands
That blossom round it, verdant everywhere
With yellow orchards, vines, and gardens fair.
The ivy floats across the slender bars
Of the high windows, that devices bear
Of holy warriors mixed in dreadful wars
For Christ His sake, nor fearing wounds, nor bloody scars,

Nor death, while Christ His banner waves o'erhead.
And there are angels on bright rolling cloud,
With rapturous faces bent above the dead ;
And kneeling saints beside them, a great crowd
Of worshippers who of like death were proud.
And all of them in colours like the sun
Burning and shining downward thro' the shroud
Of ivy, that for ever looks upon
The blessed company from height of sacred stone.

The cloisters, too, are girt about with green ;
But the great doors that open on them have
Grim carvings for all covering, and lean
'Neath weight of skeleton and oaken grave,
Where demons wait for souls the saints will save.
The stony floor is worn away with tread
Of many feet, the honeysuckles wave
Over the greensward and are lightly wed
By heedless winds that sway above the brethren dead.

And everywhere the ivy, like a dream,
Or like a strain of haunting music, clings
Upon the pillars, roof, and walls, thro' gleam
Of drowsy sunlight, leaning from brown rings
Of far-off windows, where it softly flings

Itself from tower height, and to and fro
The winds move, singing to it as it swings,
Till church and monastery overflow
With music, growing there because the ivies grow.

Dark, regal, sorrowful Night hath fled away,
The morning breaks ; September wanders by,
Glad that her beauty should in brilliant day
Be recognized by earth and worshipping sky.
The monastery bell rings, rings on high,
Rings clear and loud, and then from the church tower
Rings answering bell that will not voiceless lie
While it hath left of music, voice, or power,
To greet with glow of joy the holy matin hour.

It is the festal day of all the year,
The festival of their great patron saint,
Christ's own apostle Matthew, welcomed here
With clash of bells that gives no greeting faint,
With prayer of souls wherein doth lurk no taint
Of unrepented error—for at dawn
Each brother made confession or complaint
Of every sin, if any he did mourn,
And the good Abbot blessed his flock with prayers upborne.

And now in grave procession solemn, slow,
They move along the sombre nave, that straight
Doth kindle into rapture as they go,
With music grand and gorgeous hallowed state,
To the fair altar where two angels wait
On either side, while canopied above
Sweet Mary, ever virgin, sits, and great
And golden shines the Crucifix of love,
Like heavenly blessing that doth shield them and approve.

They singing move, their souls' sins are forgiven
In absolution perfect, kind, and free,
Yea, therefore can they smile to think of heaven
And the dear faith wherein their souls agree !
The Abbot in the midst moves reverently,
And yet withal with bright, meek happiness,
That is, I wot, the rarest thing to see !
A noble man he was, whose hand did press
To strengthen only, and was only raised to bless.

Twice thirty years useful and beautiful
His Master he had served with zealous toil,
And comforted and warned full many a soul,
And rescued many from sin's fatal coil,
And borne his part in the great world's turmoil,

And never turned from doing good, and sought
"With ceaseless energy and prayer to foil
The tempter's power and heal the ill he wrought :
Active his work, and pure his life, and wide his thought.

Behind him walked a monk, of all the train
His best-beloved. Younger by thirty years,
A careworn brother he, with burning twain
Of steadfast eyes too hot and high for tears,
And mouth where never rose but smiles of pain,
And melancholy voice and subtle ; straight
He was as the young poplar on the plain.
A man to reverence, maybe to hate,
Because he had the power in him to be great.

By day, by night, and all untiringly,
E'en as the Abbot did, so he likewise
Laboured in Christ's great kingdom zealously
To baffle Satan in his every guise.
Sinners shrank back in shame from his bright eyes,
And all good prospered, till the Abbot said,
Giving God thanks : " Thus ever doth arise
By heaven's grace strong youth to be the head
Of Christ His flock when age's usefulness is sped ! "

That fair September morning he had heard
His dear son's meek confession, wherein was
Nor broken penitence nor heavy word,
Bless God ! for neither was there any cause.
But strong rebuke he gave him for strict laws
Of penance all too rigorous, and blame
For vigils oft, and even called such flaws
In Christian life, too harsh for human frame
That must be strong to bear Christ's burden as his shame!

And then the monk rose weary from his knees,
Promised obedience by heaven's grace,
And the good Abbot bade him sleep at ease
That night, nor keep one vigil, lest from place
Of labour he be hurled to weak disgrace
Of sickness, a disgrace indeed to them—
So said the Abbot—of our chosen race
Who've sworn the current of vile sin to stem
And hope to wear of worthy work the diadem !

“ Sleep then, my son.” Slowly the monk went forth
Alone into the early air, and gazed
Upon the wild, unfettered, beauteous earth,
And on the morning sky that o'er him blazed.
And agony was in the look he raised

To heaven, and conflict and distress and pride,
The desolation of a soul that's grazed—
No more—the gates of heaven, and turns aside
To look on darkness as its heritage and guide !

And ever as he went his spirit groaned
Within him, and the thin lips moved as though
Old age had shattered them, nor had atoned
By putting peace therein, but rather woe
And misery that weakly did o'erflow
With no controlling force nor use within
The soul to guide them. With his head bent low
As if for prayer he went across the green,
The wreck and mockery of what but now had been.

But when the monastery bells rang out,
And all the brethren in procession passed
To holy mass, he walked erect, devout
Among them, meagre ever from long fast,
Kept time with steady tread to music vast
That filled God's temple, and knelt calmly down
In holy place, of all souls there the last
For scrutiny to meddle with, the one
Most revered, feared, believed in best although
least known !

O Sin, and you, Remorse, what lords you are !
You rule it savagely, and will not loose
Your hold of souls though dooming them to war
Fiercely against you, and in vain refuse
The stifling, sickening strife they e'en must choose !
When prayer is added, craft's necessity,
O God, where shall Thy light strike to infuse
A light, or how ? How strike if not to be
Avenged and slay the soul that maketh mock of Thee ?

Judge ye how far this monk had gone astray ;
Deride him not, nor sneer, nor wonder ye
Who haply have swift wandered from the way
Of honour and of duty wide as he ;
Have tried like him to make the roads agree,
And failed like him, as ever man shall fail
Whose heaven is less than his iniquity !
My heart beats sore to tell the sorrowing tale
Of greatness clothed in sin that doth itself bewail !

St. Matthew's celebration lingered long,
So seemed it to the monk, as long indeed
As in the soul a memory of wrong
Done in the dark for which the thoughts do bleed.
To the glad hymns he gave an anguished heed,

They smote him till their music he drank in
As if it were no remedy in need
But poison deadly—a great draught of sin
To feed upon or die upon, could that have been !

“ Sleep, sleep,” the Abbot said. Dim night came on,
The tortured monk beside his pallet bed
’Gan watch and pray, did penance there with groan.
A brother heard, who went with sleepy tread
To peaceful couch, and vaguely shook his head
And crossed himself, which answered for a prayer,
And fell asleep or e’er the groan was dead
Upon his ear. O easy virtue, wear
A white robe sure you must, yours doth no life-
blood bear !

A glimmering, uneasy morning. Thro’
The meadow, gliding by the ivy screen
That shuts black walls from sight and drips with dew,
The monk stalked rapidly along the green.
A kind of gladness in his face was seen—
A buried hope uprisen from the dead
And living like a real thing ; from between
His lips a sweet word or a musing fled
All uncontrolled, and new and eager was his tread.

A Legend of Jedburgh.

11

The earliest time of earliest morning. Thro'
The meadow by the ivy screen that throws
From gates and walls a plenteous rain of dew
On passers-by the Abbot swiftly goes,
Following the track of him who kills repose
And his own health and usefulness : the frown
Upon the Abbot's face more anxious grows ;
Swifter he walks the dripping meadows down
To overtake, command, chide, punish : never one

Of all his loving children but would be
Abashed to bear his anger, just always !
“ But yester morn, after confession free,
I gave commandment positive, no praise—
Commandment broken straight by him who slays
Christ's kingdom by his recklessness—for who
Shall take my work up when God ends my days
If this most fitting instrument be broken too ? ”
So muses the good Abbot, hurrying thro' the dew.

Doth a presentiment of evil rise,
Mysterious in thought, or dream, or sigh,
When evil is before us ? Mysteries
There are of thought innumerable : mystery
E'en now before the Abbot's sober eye

Floats dimly, dimly whirls about his brain,
As though most baleful truth were hovering nigh.
A stronger prayer he saith, but all in vain,
He cannot rid himself of unaccustomed pain.

There is a wood beyond the meadows far
Wherein great ferns wave to each other, where
The trees are clasped as close as lovers are,
And sunlight, moonlight, starlight on the air
Without may wander, but ne'er pierce the rare
Green cloisters that like softly-curtained room
Exclude the light, but dainty are and fair,
Hung round with heavy sweetness of perfume,
Richer and lovelier because of glimmering gloom.

Here he doth pause to say anew a prayer
For swift deliverance from unquiet thought,
And hears, or thinks he hears, thrown on the air,
Voices that rise and mingle and are caught
Among the branches. By experience taught,
He will not trust his senses easily,
But waits if words convincing shall be brought
From spot so lonely : leaning 'gainst a tree
His thought 'most fears to think what this might be.

Voices, indeed, he hears, first swift and low,
Then louder and more earnest and more strong.
The Abbot wipes the cold sweat from his brow,
He dare not link his son's high name with wrong!
His heart beats thick till prayers about it throng
To help it to be strong. The voices move
Like bells alternate the dark trees among,
But words he cannot hear, whate'er they prove,
Because he's searching far above them for God's love!

Oh, it is hard to dream a good man base
Or capable of baseness, like almost
To losing God or faith in Him! The Abbot's face
Grew calm at last, his hands the branches tossed
Asunder, and the pathless green he crossed.
Beyond a man's voice sobbing wearily
And terribly, as if for heaven lost,
He shivering heard, and saw—O, sight to see!—
The haggard monk convulsed at a fair woman's knee!

O, souls ungentle, ye who have no love
Complete in love, no mercy, might have spurned
The suffering soul straightway, nor sought to prove
Its guilt or innocence, nor why it burned
To ashes in your sight, nor o'er it yearned

With strength divine and equal sorrow ! Not
Like ye this Christian priest, who purely turned
Pure eyes of love and dignity's sweet thought
Of sympathy upon the face of him he sought,

And waited for a reason or a word.
The sobbing monk fell stricken to the ground,
As if above an angel with his sword
Had thrilled the place and pierced the gloom around ;
But spake at last with strange, uncertain sound
That after grew distinct and passionate ;
The whiles the maiden with her brown hair wound
About her face, shrouded and shrinking, sate,
And listened dumbly to the rapid voice of fate.

When as he paused, the Abbot said, " Speak on,"
Loud the monk cried in voice of sharp despair,
Whose tone says all before the tale's begun :
" O, father, it is well that you should share
Maybe the misery your children bear,
And I am miserable, ay, as man
Can be ! wicked and false, as you may hear,
If to such wreck as I your mercy can
Give heed ! " The Abbot's earnest face grew sudden wan,

But calmly, "Speak, my son," was all he said,
For he had hoped against or falsity
Or wickedness, and deeply his heart bled
To think that both or either here might be.
"O, father," thus the monk, "wild misery
Is mine, my life has broke itself in twain !
I swore to love but holy church, and she
Hath had for months divided love—O stain
Of shame, hypocrisy that withers heart and brain !

"I loved this woman, yea, I loved her so
Religion died for love ! and hour by hour
I gathered to my soul the weight of woe
That now doth rule me with its direful power,
And gives to my lost soul but blight for dower !
She loves me not, nor ever loved, but fed
A fearful vanity—like storms that lower,
Break, and scatter ruin overhead,
Her words have shook my destiny and hurled it dread

"Upon my heart ! The Church I have deceived,
Its solemn vow forgotten, Christ forsook,
Because in sooth I tempter's voice believed
And the strange magic of a woman's look,
And dreamed of a new heaven when she spoke !

O, God!—yet may I not cry so—O God,
From the swift, charmed dream I have awoke,
Forbid to cry to God : the bitter load
Of sin doth sink me low as death and hell's abode ! ”

Wild sobs despairing of remorse and grief
Broke thro' the sharp-strained voice. The Abbot's eyes
Grew dim. “ Dear son of mine, your bosom's chief,
Your spiritual lord, doth bid you rise,
He in God's name can bring you sure relief—
You, feeble vessel, wrecked on the broad reef
That girts humanity, and sinks likewise
Daily religion's sons from true belief !—
I bring you consolation fit, the supreme prize

“ Of heaven's pardon ! Look to God ! Oh, leave
Behind you here sin's losses and sin's woe,
Around your soul a two-fold garment weave
Of prayer to keep it safe from subtle foe !
Pray oftener, as I will pray also ;
The Church will shield you more, I love you more
And trust you more ! remiss let neither grow,
But let us work as we ne'er worked before
For true, great goodness and Christ's kingdom bright
before ! ”

He stretched his hands to lift his brother up,—
His worn and erring brother, who with tears
Of mighty gratitude and struggling hope
Bent o'er the hands that comforted his fears,
And clasped them with the yearning that reveres—
A yearning beyond utterance. Within
His soul took sudden calm, and strange, long years
Began to gather 'twixt him and his sin,—
Oh, what if life might grow the prize it once had been !

Home side by side among the dew they went,
Both mute—the Abbot's soul was lifted up
In thanks to God who made him instrument,
Though feeble, of the great Redeemer's hope,
To save a fervent life, and break the cup
Of death pressed to its lips. At mass that day
Humbly and tearfully the monk did stoop .
Low in his place with a new peace to pray—
Thanksgiving for soul saved the Abbot dear did say.

The Abbot lived through years of good deeds done,
The monk beside him shared in each good deed.
The Abbot died, as dies a twilight sun,
The monk, his best-loved son, did him succeed.
And never yet was there a heart did bleed

But found his presence beautiful and blest ;
To him all weary lives turned in their need,
By day, by night, year after year, thro' rest
Of life, to him the strongest Christian, and the best !

* * * * *

The ivy shakes from Jedburgh's stones the dew ;
The broken church, in garments torn and rent,
Lifts high to heaven its age of memories true,
Its sweet and venerable monument.
Its power and its beauty are not spent,
Though monastery walls are in the dust,
And living days are gone that eke it knew :
Deeds Christ-like glorify it as they must,
While man is penitent and the Almighty just.

A LEGEND OF NEWARK.

In deep delicious vale of Newarkton,
At murky dawn, across the fields doth pace
A knight in armour shining like the sun,
With vizor on his face.

Alas, alas, he fearful makes the place !

A snowy plume is nodding on his head,
Upon his breast of steel a black cross lies,
And on his wrist he holds with sable thread

A hawk with shrouded eyes,
Alas, alas, that never sees the skies !

Bright silver spurs are buckled to his heel,
His snowy mantle droops like snowy plume,
And clad throughout in silver and in steel,
He paces thro' the gloom.

Alas, alas, for him all things make room !

And far behind him flies a lonely steed
That strives, but ne'er his lord may overtake,—

Though he fly onward with a reckless speed,

He never speed doth make :

Alas, alas, for that poor creature's sake !

His beauteous eyes are overbrimmed with dread,

His flight doth make the very night around

To quake with fear ; the bridle from his head

Hangs loosely to the ground.

Alas, alas, now whither is he bound ?

There lies a trail of light beside him far

Along the grass, a light that hath no look

Of cloud, or dew, or moon, or glimmering star

Or silver, winding brook :

Alas, alas, for peace hath it forsook !

He makes no sound upon the darksome fields ;

Although his flying feet are borne thereon

It seemeth to the touch earth frightened yields

And footing offers none.

Alas, alas, for him all things do shun !

And silently the knight moves on before,

As silent as behind the hurrying steed.

Two fishers waking on the river shore

Do cross themselves with speed,

Alas, alas, as well I wot they need !

For this fair-smiling vale at night becomes
The very haunt and home of wickedness ;
Who seeks to tell the baleful reason, sums
 The old tale, never less,
Alas, alas, of sin's most dire distress !

No living man is this that thro' the dim
And early light doth move with noiseless tread,
Nor living steed doth madly follow him—
 They are but shadows dread,
Alas, alas, of the dumb, restless dead !

A Northern soldier knight this phantom was,
Of lineage unstained, who roamed among
The high, blue mountains that were books and laws—
 To them of that wild tongue,
Alas, alas, what time begins my song.

* * * * *

Who e'er has sinned so sore that eke for grace
He cannot hope, nor e'er high heaven to see,
Should look into the lady Elspeth's face.
There's many a man of many a degree
Doth rate his soul's salvation less than this,
 Nor other heaven doth miss.

She was the sweetest lady that e'er said
An Ave from the depth of guileless heart.
The halo of pure youth was round her head,
Her life into sweet charities did part ;
Herself was seldom in her thought, because
So great her mercy was.

And yet she was the loveliest lady that
E'er combed her golden hair in Scottis land ;
The purple broidered cushion where she sat
'Most like a throne appeared, for she was grand
In beauty, as in life all innocent
And in her mind content.

She was of noble blood that ne'er did mix
With humble, and she had one mightiest Friend,
Even Jesus, He who died on crucifix.
As He lent to the poor so she did lend,
And as He gave so she essayed to give,
And meekly did she live.

Blue were her eyes, but full of such sweet peace
Their colour he ne'er saw who gazed therein ;
Rather instead his dreams of good increase,
And feels he sudden shame because of sin.

She was no brilliant lady, but a maid
Whose hopes in God were staid.

And never had she known an earthly love :
She was so pure and high that few did dare
Her from her heavenly quietude to move ;
And they who did, put reverence in their prayer,
And kissed the lily robe and bent the knee
As if true saint were she.

And never had she known an earthly love
Nor earthly love desired. One sunny day
Came riding gaily thro' her father's grove
A knight whose snowy plume did toss and sway
Above his shining helmet, and his eyes
Did burn as stars in skies.

And wonderingly the stranger knight she watched
From window where the ivy blossomed green.
The rider and the steed were nobly matched,
Their like in Newark's vale was never seen.
A scarlet cross upon the knightly breast
Proved him Crusader blest ;

As well as did the trappings of the steed,
A noble animal, with beauteous eyes,
Whose stately breast the attentive maid did heed ;
There flamed the Cross that infidels despise
Beneath the neck superb, where bridle hung
Fringes and stars among.

Oh, none did wear that sign on breast, or arm,
Or shield, and none did so their steeds array
Save them who little recked of body's harm,
Who for Christ's sake did throw their lives away.
So up the lady rose, and down she came
With welcome in Christ's name.

And her old sire with kindly courtesy
Gave ready hand of greeting to his guest,
"Here ever welcome," saying, "shall he be
Who wears that blessed token on his breast."
And each grave servant's face did wear a smile,
Saluting him the while.

For that small household in secluded space
Of Newark's sheltering hills were Christians true,
And all unspoiled with pride or worldliness,
Thro' steadfast prayer and kind deeds joined thereto ;

And hospitality aye hath a part
In every Christian heart.

The knight had fought in Palestine, had been
To great Jerusalem, earth's heavenly town !
The sepulchre of the dear Lord had seen,
From sacred Mount of Olives had looked down,
And thrice had crossed the sea with godly men
To fight the Saracen.

The lady Elspeth served him with her hand,—
What hireling should help Christ's chosen son ?
The knight gave plenteous thanks, for such a land
Of welcomes never had he lighted on.
But though he weary was and hungry too
With fasting, he ne'er knew.

The picture that he held before his eyes,
On which he feasted as on daintiest food,
So filled his soul with pleasure's new surprise
He scarce the reason of it understood.
He had in many a court seen many a dame
Who here were put to shame.

The lady Elspeth's quaint white garments were
Of soft wool fashioned, clinging to her knees
Like a nun's raiment, decked about with fur
Of a soft yellow, the fair hue one sees
On breast of Southern bird, and belt of gold
Her beauty did enfold.

A rosary of coral and of pearl,
And cross of pearl, her mother's ere she died,
Wherewith she, dying, blessed the lonely girl,
Hung from the golden girdle at her side.
A tiny coif she wore upon her head,
Whence downward glittering sped

Her sunny hair, with a soft auburn light
Upon it like a halo. "If a saint,"
So marvelling quoth within himself the knight,
"Were but so exquisite, Sin's loud complaint
Were straight that she were of her sons bereft :
No sinner sure were left !"

The lady Elspeth seemed a charmed maid,
Of gentleness the luminous, bright star ;
Modest she was, and yet all unafraid,
As they who dwell among great mountains are :

Being allied thereby to nobler thought,
A nobler life is wrought.

The knight was bold, not wicked more than was
Crusader's right; the heathen he did burn,
And slay, and torture, following God's laws,
And infidels and Jews his soul did spurn;
To unbelievers all like end he gave
Of deep, accursèd grave.

Now love, the merciless, made headway fast
Against the current of his stormy will;
Against his holy vows and mission vast,
'Gainst highest duty that precluded thrill
Or thought of love, save for the cause of God
And His Incarnate Word.

O, lady Elspeth, leave the stranger guest
To other care than yours, that grows so sweet
Even the blessed Cross upon his breast
He would pluck off to lavish at your feet!
No more Crusader he, but lover now
Who hath forgot Christ's vow!

Beneath the glance of the bright, burning eyes,
Whose resolution might not be mistook—
For it was full and strong as sun in skies—
The lady her accustomed seat forsook
At board, where she had sweetly served her guest,
By sudden fear possessed.

And ever in her bower told her beads,
And clasped the crucifix that did enfold
The mighty loves for which her bosom bleeds,
Her Saviour's and her mother's dead in mould.
Oh, hapless life the lonely maidens have
Whose mothers lie in grave !

O love, love, love, when thou art born who knows
The times or seasons, heat or cold or pain ?
Yea, these are like the proud Crusader's vows,
Of which nor heed nor memory remain !
The shallow stream of life becomes a sea
Deep as eternity.

The knight paced to and fro in Newarkton,
The lady Elspeth's sire's domain, where wide
And beautiful a river in the sun
Doth it from Saxon heritage divide.

Where silver birches wave and larches lean
Across the smiling green.

In that most tranquil household while he staid
None said, "Oh, haste thee back to holy work!"
None thought, unless it were the trembling maid,
That he his Master's errand fain would shirk.
Since troublous wounds he had that sore him pained,
Thrice welcome he remained.

At morning striding thro' the sunny vale,
Or e'er the light 'gan creep adown the trees,
An evil spirit did him wild assail
And whispered wicked counsel on the breeze,
The whiles an angel leaning thro' the air
Soft beckoned him to prayer.

He struggles ill 'gainst sin who loves it, he
Ill takes advice who hath made up his mind.
The knight struck deep his dagger in birch tree,
With haughty oath that did for ever bind
His poor, sad soul, that henceforth ne'er shall hear
An angel at its ear!

For Satan the departing angel's place
Usurped with eagerness ; in that wild breast
He hid with guile the lady Elspeth's face—
The knight's own blight of passion did the rest.
Swift to the fiend he called who did rejoice
To hear man's tortured voice.

And on that day a compact fierce and strong
Was sworn atwixt the two that should not fail ;
A soul's salvation perished there among
The quaking foliage in Newark vale.
But in exchange the false Crusader had
Treasure to make him glad,—

The lady Elspeth !—who should be his own,
Whom no man but himself should ever hold
In sweet embrace, whose loving would atone
Were fifty souls into that lost one rolled !
From the drear place he went with steadfast eye
That shone with victory.

Before him, lo, the lady in the grove !
Her milk-white hand he seized, bent fervent knee,
And passionately told her of his love ;
The whiles she cried aloud with fear to see

The crucifix upon his breast all black
Since its most woful wrack ;

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And would have fled, but that he held her close,
And, with a daring born of rapture fanned
By fiend's sweet promises, poured hopes and vows
And loving triumphs o'er the trembling hand ;
Till Elspeth cried, " Sweet sir, it is not meet
Your hostess so to treat !

" Nor is it meet that you, Christ's servant, should
Frame earthly loves that serve Him not ; nor is it meet
To idly, falsely live, the struggling good
In sloth forsaking—rise up to your feet,
And take the sword and crucifix unstained—
Too long you've here remained ! "

Then cried the knight, " O, lady, in your eyes
I would not slothful seem, nor lacking e'er
In love's most sweet and tuneful courtesies,
Nor faithless to the cause whose trust I bear,
Nor coward shrinking from the battle field
Fearful his life to yield !

“In this same hour I go hence to prove
To you, sweetheart, that holy cause is dear,
And that I e’en can battle against love,
The dread and powerful enemy I fear !
Nor am I all ungenerous to press
Rudely for happiness.”

With that he loosed her hand with reverent mien,
And rose to leave her ; whereat suddenly
“Dear knight,” she cried, “if urgent thou hast been
To win my love, do thou as urgent be
In loving Him to whom thou owest years
Of service, and my tears

Shall pardon swift thy stumbling on the way,
And my strong prayers shall gird thy soul about.
For though so weak we be, the prayers we say
Are strong and do avail us without doubt.”
He humbly thanked her fair and answered slow,
“Sweet dame, before I go

Something I fain would give in gratitude,
The which if you refuse to my farewell
Such bitterness within my soul will brood
Not your protecting prayers might it dispel !

For base it were to be beholden so,
And all ungrateful go !

“ In dear remembrance of your heavenly grace,
And of your sire's welcome, the fair steed
I leave to love you in its master's place.
To ask your love for him there is no need,
For he's as gentle as yourself, sweet maid—
Farewell, may Christ thee aid ! ”

And he was gone or ever she could say
Or yea, or nay, or answering blessing give.
It was an early hour of the day,
The sleepy house had not begun to live,
There hung a heavy silence in the wood
Where all alone she stood.

For she had left the bed that sweet sleep shunned,
And fled into the morning air to pray,
And knew not that the knight with hawk and hound
Had gone to hunt or ever it was day,
And that the hound lay stricken as if dead
Near by in thicket dread ;

Nor did she see, beneath the brooding trees,
The hawk all hooded deep in sable guise
On his left wrist—for who the earthly sees
That hath the heavenly before his eyes ?
And she the crucifix all changed had seen,
And mused what that might mean.

The knight fled to the bright river's brink,
Called Satan to his aid with curses deep,
And kneeling down did quaff the crystal drink
To woo his feverish passion into sleep.
And there bethought himself of easy plan
Most fit for evil man.

He to the stable turned with fiercest speed
By way circuitous and hidden ; all
Was silent thereabout, but the fair steed
Neighed soft when the familiar foot did fall,
And the brown eyes shone browner with delight
At his dear master's sight.

And then the knight took from its resting place
The velvet saddle with its trappings green,
On which the lady rode to church or chase,
And harnessed him the streaks of dawn between,

And decked him ready all for her to ride,
Soft rein and whip beside ;

And said, “ By devil’s help I shall prevail :
Eve’s daughter is this holy lady still,
And surely straight will ride adown the dale,
To try if soldier-steed will heed her will.
Myself will watch for her in hidden place
To ride a long day’s race

“ Down hill, down dale, far into Saxon land,
Sharing the saddle with her, for ’tis sure
The horse my bidding swift will understand,
Nor other curbing ever will endure.
This by your leave, sweet lady, who art mine
Ere morrow’s sun shall shine ! ”

With that he leaves the stable door ajar,
And flieth swiftly thro’ the drowsy lands.
The lady musing slowly from afar,
Soon at the door like to an angel stands.
But when she sees the steed all harnessed quite,
Newly her heart takes fright.

But the brown eyes have light in them that wins,
The head superb leans to her timid hand,
And flush of pleasure and of pride begins
To stain her cheek, to own a thing so grand.
Although her palfreys three are beautiful,
This creature is worth all!

Oh, what a sight for the new-risen sun
To watch with wakening and admiring eyes!
Never, I ween, had he looked down upon
Two things so fair since he was born in skies.
The maid rides slowly thro' the vale, between
The birches' drooping green.

There is a spot in Newark's vale wherein
The sun doth rarely wander, where a brook
Runs deep below, and two strait paths begin
To cross each other, meeting on a rock
Beyond, where black trees hang and hide the gleam
Below of flying stream.

The steed hath reached this steep and narrow pass,
Familiar to the maid as garden walls,
And sudden stops, afeard, although the grass
Is tempting sweet with dew that softly falls.

And all his beauty changes into fear
As danger dread were near.

And O, sweet saints, the rein he never feels,
The voice he never hears, but with a bound
Doth hurl himself in anguish o'er the fields,
With quivering feet that scarce do touch the ground.
May God preserve the soul of that lost maid,
For past is human aid !

The place accursed is full of spirits drear,
Whose baleful influence the creature knows,
Seeing, indeed, the demons crouching near,
Till reason straight for ever from him goes ;
And on, with foaming bit and fiery eyes,
He like a whirlwind flies.

Along the precipice above the stream,
He flies thro' ferns that die beneath his touch,
The birches part asunder at red gleam
Of eyes unmeaning and 'gin weep for such.
Onward he goes, and downward from dark rock
Leaps with a sullen shock.

The knight impatient, half a league beyond,
Dreaming of love's beguilings, in the air
Seeth a vision that to his most fond
Desire doth seem his beauteous lady rare,
Who pointeth with pale finger to the brook
As there to bid him look.

A snowy crucifix she leaned upon,
Her eyes were brighter than the diamond
He wears upon his sleeve that's bright as sun.
He dared not meet the gaze, but to the ground
Fell suddenly, as though her spirit were
In sooth before him there.

The vision passed—another took its place.
There Satan stood, and eke with sneer and frown
Cried out, "The compact made 'twixt us a space
Ago, thyself hast broken and undone!
Thyself hast broke it, calling on the Lord
With vow at every word

Thou spakest to the damsel in the grove,
And further care will I not take with thee;
Go back unaided to thy dainty love,
And win—or lose and die, whiche'er it be!"

The vision passed, and wild the knight returned
Whither his passion yearned.

And passeth on the way the rocky place
Where two roads mingle, seeth thereabout
The trampled grass, and tracketh it a space
In fear new-born and passion's sleepless doubt ;
Follows the broken trees, and comes upon
The rock that sunbeams shun.

And far below upon the bleeding stones
That line the stream, O Christ ! the dying steed
Is lying, and the lifeless maid ; while moans
The river helpless in their dreadful need—
Oh, deep damnation of the sight, wherein
Is mockery of sin !

And deep damnation of the sight, wherein
Is loss, loss, loss of fiercest passion's hope !
“ The devil cried, ‘ Lose thou and die—or win’ !
Yea, death is left to give my passion scope ! ”
O, holy angels, have ye tears to shed
O'er such unshriven dead ?

At noon that day two fishers moving by
Along the stream below, come unaware
Upon a strange, dead group that awful lie
Afore them, though so great, exceeding fair,—
A knight, a lady, and a beauteous steed ;
Of whom, kind souls, ye rede.

Oh, ne'er is seen that martyred maiden's shade
From wood or grove all pitiful to rise ;
Her body 'neath a green ash tree is laid,
Her spirit pure is risen to Paradise.
But he, the traitor to his God, doth rest
Illy in grave unblest !

And goeth wandering from dawn to dawn,
The crucifix all black upon his breast.
If you should meet him on the morrow morn
The morrow's hours for you would be unblest.
O God, be good to us, and us all save
From sin and restless grave !



Vincent Brooks Day & Son

LEGEND O' THE BURNT DOOL.

CRAIGMILLAR CASTLE.

A.D. 1811.

FIERCE John o' Gilmerton ane day
Spak' in his daughter's ear,
"Lassie, I swear, ye'll gang nae mair
Yon pale-faced priest to hear !

"O'er mickle we hae had o' prayer,
An' we'll draw breath a wee
Frae midnight mass an' a' sic gear
That sair misliketh me.

"Bide ye within—if ye maun pray
Pray ye at hame. I doubt
O just the sort o' prayer ye say
That maks ye sae devout !"

Legends of Scotland.

An' oh, like to the saut-sea faem
The daughter's cheek was white,
An' saft she cried, " I'll bide at hame,
Nor gang to mass the nicht."

An' it is midnight by the clock—
Craigmillar's litha lord,
Spite of the weighty wordie spoke,
Did mickle doubt the word.

An' he would see if the maide indeed
In chambre high doth bide ;
If na, by Christ hē sware, she'll need
For ill that wad betide

Sic prayer as ne'er was able yet
A puling priest to say !
Sae strode he up the dark stair set
Wi' giddy stone the way.

Reachit the chambre, found it lone
As e'er was chambre left,
O' all but the fast dying moon
Deserted and bereft.

Then fierce an' loud wi' furious ca'
He summonit his men,
Oh, up and down the sullen ha'
His voice did fright them then.

An' to the lady's chambre they
Did in sair haste repair,
The silken tapestries did sway
At sic swift entering there.

Wi' the braw curtains pulled apart
Sir John stude by the bed ;
They heard the beating o' his heart
Atwixt the words he said.

"The nicht I'll know, as some hae known,
As aye belike know ye,
What fetches the sweet ladye down
Frae home and father's ee.

"An hour I'll pause, suld she come not
Hie we to kirk wi' speed,
An' see for ance the deil's spot
Where his ain warks proceed."

An' one has rung from the castle clock—
Their lord moved stern an' still,
For ne'er a word had the silence broke
Since he spak out his will.

But a' the holy stars shrank back,
They feared what he did say ;
The wan moon turnit sudden black
And wouldna light the way.

Sad things an' sweet it could repeat
But keepit counsel close,
When twa' sma' feet did fly to meet
The lover in God's ain house.

Oh, how the priest, wi' fair brown eyes
An' voice serene and clear,
Did tender gaze, and speak likewise
Things unco' sweet to hear !

An' she hath borne Craigmillar's moods,
The bluidy days, the strife
O' feastings wild, the drunken feuds
Despoilin' her young life.

Mother o' God, suld peace be sin ?
 Low kneelin' at his feet,
She hath na thought what life hath been
 Because 'tis now sae sweet.

It is a sweet and subtle night,
 The moon is low i' the skies,
The twain held i' the dying light
 Lean to each others eyes.

The candles on the altar glow
 Mair pale, because their flame
Shines in the lovely eyes below
 Wi' mair o' heaven's claim.

Stealthily flies Craigmillar's lord
 Wi' a' his men to church,
They gird it wi'out loss o' word
 Or time, and bar the porch,

Close the great gate, an' sae await
 What mair is to be dune.
Sir John can spy the altar's state
 By the dim light thereon,

Can see the Christ, the cross, the crown,
The Virgin in her place,
Can see the pallid priest bent down
To sweeter virgin face !

The armed men at the dark door wait,
At window, and at porch,
Each bearin' secret in his hand
O' bluid an unlit torch.

Oh ! at the fierce command they strike
Deftly the stubborn steel ;
Red lights spring fast an' demon-like
Around the churchyard reel.

An' swift an' swift are the torches plied
North, south, and west and east ;
There lives nae grace for souls inside,
O' maiden and o' priest.

They were sae near to God they caught
Nae sound, till o'er their eyes
The flame broke like wild thoughts that stoodna'
In fear o' Paradise,

An' heat an' flame rolled in wi' cry,
 "The priest sall hae his bride,
An' holy kirk bear companye,
 Nane, nane sall be denied!"

O waeful hour! nae word they speak,
 Each doomed ane sees and hears,
But spite o' destiny's drear wreak
 Gies smiles in place o' tears.

O blessed hour! their living kiss
 Needeth nae fire nae flame—
God sent them speedy sae to bliss,
 God keep them in the same!

THE BATTLE O' GLEN FRUIN.

A.D. 1596.

THE laird o' Luss rose i' his bed
An' lookit o'er the glen,
"This day I'll gather my men together
To slay the MacGregor's men."

An' to and fro the word has gane,
An' quietly it gaes ;
But quiet as it gaes, MacGregor
Gets summons o' his faes.

MacGregor has his guid braid sword,
His bonnet on his heid,
Alang he steppit as proud as an eagle,
An' like a deer for speed.

"Oh, whaur are you goin', my bauld chieftain,
Wi' the shinin' steel in your hond ?
Oh, whaur are you goin', MacGregor,
Winna' ye mak' here a stond ?"

Spak' out MacGregor, tossin'
His braid blade i' the air,
"To Glen Fruin, to Glen Fruin,
The black Colhouns are there!"

An' ane has rin, an' twa has rin,—
O' a' MacGregor's clan
Is left in the MacGregor's countrie
Not ane weel-bodied man.

They're a' gane, they're a' gane,
A thousand fightin' men,
As guidly a sicht as ane could see
As they gaed down the glen.

The heron's feathers i' their bonnets,
The pistols at their side,
The glittering daggers i' their hosen,
Their plaidies blawin' wide.

There's an auld fuss an' an auld feud,
Saxty year auld may be;
The MacGregors wull hae it out at last,
An' ficht they wull wi' glee.

It was eleven o'clock by the sun,
They 'gan to fight Colhoun,
But not eleven o'clock o' the night
Was a' the fightin' dune.

The laird o' Luss he wadna' yield,
Weel, weel he fought, the bluid
O' a score o' faes was on his steel,
An' a' unhurt he stude.

Cam' up MacGregor fierce an' strang—
Oh, a wild chief was he !
An' he could fight as haird an' as lang
As ony in thot countrie.

He smote Colhoun upon the heid,
He fought him wi' his dirk,
An' stabbit him till he was deid,
An' didna' tire o' the wark.

An' he an' his wi' shoutin' gae :
Twa hundred dyin' foes,
An' as mony mair o' deid anes lie
Afore they tak' repose.

The Battle o' Glen Fruin.

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The morn in Fruin's narrow glen
MacGregor's wark is dune,
He dips his dagger i' the stream,
An' shakes it i' the sun:

The auld, auld feud's avenged,
Colhoun died wi' it, an' his clan
Sae broken are and ruined sair,
Ficht mair they winna' can.

But they ha' ta'en a churl's revenge,
To E'enbro' to the king
Gae messengers wha o' MacGregor
Mickle sair stories bring.

An' Jamie outlaws a' the clan,
Wi' letter an' wi' sword,
Puir thing was he to trust Colhoun
Agen the MacGregor's word!

Their houses an' their londs are ta'en,
Their names proscribed : the man
Wha daurs to write his name MacGregor
Lies under royal ban.

They havena' whaur to lay their heids,
They're hated an' they're cursed,—
Think ye MacGregor was down-hearted?
'Tis Jamie's lot's the worst!

For Jamie's londs an' Jamie's houses,
An' Jamie's beasties a',
An' Jamie's soldiers mickle suffer
When the chief's hond doth fa'!

An' fa' it doth, often an' sair—
Frae Ness to E'enbro' town
There's naethin' MacGregor daurna' do,
Howe'er the Lowlands frown.

Lang life, lang life to thee, MacGregor,
Thou'lt not be putten down;
Ane o' thy faes I wadna' be
Not for King Jamie's crown!

KILRAVOCK'S WOIN'.

THE laird he couldna sleep at night,
He couldna rest in his bed,
For thinkin' o' the Earl's daughter,
Who was too proud to wed.

That fair ladye rode ilka day
Wi' four and twenty knights,
An' maids the same for companye,
The proudest o' proud sights.

An' ilka knight rode chestnut steed
That ne'er his lord did grieve,
An' wore a white plume in his bonnet,
A jewel on his sleeve.

An' ilka steed was harnessed round
Wi' silver or wi' gowd,
An' dainty skippit o'er the ground,
As 'twere a king that rode.

Legends of Scotland.

An' ilka maid wore pearlis pale
Strung in her flowin' hair,
A velvet vest an' gleamin' gownd,
White shoon an' hosen fair.

An' ilka maid rode a grey palfrey,
Tied round wi' ribbons blue ;
But the Earl's daughter in the midst
Was the stateliest to view.

She rode a horse as black as jet,
Wi' jewels on his head ;
Her dress was a' o' violet,
In her hand roses red.

Oh lily, lily-white was her hand !
The laird sighed in his bed,
Wi' thinking o' the Earl's daughter
Who was too proud to wed.

The laird his was a stalwart arm
As ever drew a sword,
An' his a voice as brave an' pleasant
As ever spak' a word.

But a' for love o' the Earl's daughter,
He 'gan grow sair distraught,
An' cared na for the world's doin's
Wi' his dear love in his thought.

Trippit a maid across the muir,
A peasant o' mean bluid,
She cam' along by the lanesome tower,—
He watched her where he stood.

Her cap was white, her kerchief was white,
Her apron bright and blue,
Her kirtle was as green as the grass,
Her hosen blue also.

“God gie ye gude e'en, my gallant master,
I come to ask at ye—”
“Ask on,” quo' he, “my bonnie lassie,
What wad ye hae wi' me?”

“Oh, I hae right the holiday time,
Sin' I the bonniest be,
To ask nane less than the laird's ain sel'
To skip ane dance wi' me.”

“ That maunna be, my weel-fau’re’d lassie,
A great oath I have sworn,
That if I dance na wi’ my bright ladye,
I winna wi’ woman born.”

“ An’ wha may she be, ye’re bright ladye ?—
An’ is she bright as me ?
An’ has she been chosen amang a hunder’
The bonniest to be ? ”

“ Now I maun laugh, my perkit lassie,
At sic sair vanitie !
The Earl’s daughter amang ten thousan’
Would aye the bonniest be ! ”

Then laughed aloud that churlish maid,
Fu’ sweet the laughter was ;
Her wee, white teeth shone wi’ the laughter,
Her black e’en glint like stars.

“ Oh, whatten a braw, braw wooer ye are,
My laird o’ Kilravock ! ” quo’ she.
“ I wot ye gie me my just deserts,
Shairp wordis for vanitie.

“ For gin I am sae bonnie, sae bonnie,
Whaur are ye're e'en, fause knight ?
Tho' I lo'e ye mair an' better than ony,
I suld say nay for spite.”

Oh, doun he drappit upon his knee,
He couldna' speak a word ;
But he was married happily,
Sae leastways I hae heard.

PUIR HELEN.

My darlin' sleeps in the grave,
I canna', canna' get to him;
Not a' that I can do
Will out o' the cauld earth woo him !

Is it na' strange a husband
Could dee wi'out his wife,
An' gae sae sudden an' lanely
Into the gloamin' life ?

Is it na' strange a wife
Could see her husband dyin'
An' yet gae on wi' life
Nor down by him be lyin' ?

To him compared wi' me
What were baith earth an' heaven ?
For my saul's verity
Baith, baith he would ha' given !

I canna' think at a',
Although I'm breathin' an' leevin';
The licht o' my soul's awa',
An' I'm too dazed for grievin'.

I gae alane at nicht
To the hills whaur I used to find him,
To the same auld quiet spot
Thro' the starlight blinkin' an' blindin';

To the great mossy rocks
Stondin' aboon the heather,
Whaur we twa sat sae oft
An' wove our hearts together.

An' there I ca' "my darlin'!"
As saft as I can ca' him,
An' he ne'er comes—oh, whatten
Wi'out me could befa' him?

Oh, is he down in the grave,
An' am I leevin' that lo'e him?
Then whatten's the worth o' life's lave?
I canna', canna' get to him!

THE THISTLE BADGE.

A.D. 700.

FRAE Norroway King Erlen sailed
Across the purple sea,
An' anchored in a Scottish bay,
Wi' a' his companie.

They were twa hundred Norsemen bauld
O' wonderfu' strang size,
Wi' shields o' iron on their breasts,
An' iron on their thighs.

They anchored at the early dawn,
An' marchit a' the way,
Until they cam' to a frounin' fort,
Big and black i' the way.

It stude upon a mountain side,
Amang great rocks an' stanes :
Wha wad ha' fallen there wad sure
Ha' broken a' his banes.

They waited till the deid o' nicht,
A' hidden in a wood,
Nae mon o' them you culd ha' seen
Tho' search for him you suld.

When it grew black, an' very black,
King Erlen cries, "Wha'll be
The first o' a' my companie
To spy the place for me?"

Ulric his servant gie a jump,
"I'll be the first," quo' he,
"An' hame wi' store o' gowd an' siller
I'll sail across the sea."

An' he has gane wi' stealthy fut
An' up the mountain clomb :
Not ae Scots lord nor ae Scots soldier
Was ware that he did come.

An' he has tracked the fut-paths a',
The best an' waur also,
An' he has led those Norsemen bauld
Safe upward frae below.

An' they ha' girt the wa's around,
An' ane by ane they gae :
They're a' as dumb as ghaists culd be,
An' heavy sleeps the fae.

Ane o' them—puir unlucky wight—
Trippit upon a stane,
An' doun amang the purple thistles,
Fu' twenty fut he's gane.

He's down amang the purple thistles :
Sic sair pain did they gie,
He cried an' roarit loud, an' waukt
The whole Scot's companie.

Oh, an' whatten a wark was then !
They trippit as they fled,
An' fast cam' doun the Scottis men
An' dinged 'em owre the heid.

An' still the wight amang the thistles,
Wi' his banes brak' in twa,
Roarit wi' pain—it was nae wonder—
Wi' mair noise than they a'.

The ship lay rockin' i' the bay
A weary, weary while ;
King Erlen didna get the length
O' ane puir Scottis mile.

The ship lay rockin' in the bay ;
King Erlen didna ken :
It might be rockin' noo for him
Or yet for his Norsemen.

And frae that nicht the Scottis men
Wear badge o' thistle weed,
For luve o' its guid service dune ;—
Let Englismen tak' heed.

THE DEATH O' LORD MACDONALD.

THE ladye had a voice like a bird,
A breath like the new-mawn hay,
Her kirtle glowed as red as the heather,
Her mantle wi' roses gay.

Oh, there wasna' in a' the land
Sic a sweet, haughty dame—
Beauty an' pride went weel together
I' the daughter o' the Graeme.

Mony a knight had sought her hond
An' wearied for her love,
But she was cauld as her castle wa'
An' haird as it to move.

She was as bright as the bright sunlight,
As pure an' as free as the air.
Cam' by MacDonald o' the Isles
To get a sight o' her.

Oh, unco' was the love that sair
Brak' sudden o'er the twa !
An' she has ta'en her four doggies
An' left her father's ha'.

Awa' across the muir she gaes
An' stonds upon the shore,
An' waits for Lord MacDonald
Wi' her wee doggies four.

An' he has rin as swift as e'er
A lover guid did rin—
There's ane behind hates him an' his
An' winna let him win.

An' ane behind gies him a blow,
An' smites him to the ground—
Oh, lang, lang may the ladye go
The lanely shore around !

MacDougall gie the backward stroke
An' fled to thwart the blame—
As mickle he hated Lord MacDonald
As he lo'ed the Lady Graeme.

Legends of Scotland.

Oh, lang, lang doth the ladye pace
The lanely shore around—
Bleedin' an' dyin', Lord MacDonald
Cam' slow across the ground.

Down at her feet he fell, he couldna'
Speak ane only word.
The red bluid drippit frae his plaid,
He stretched his arms upward.

An' cauld as marble stude that ladye,
The frenzie in her heid ;
She spak' nae word, she made nae sign
Until that he was deid.

An' then she crouchit by his side,
An' whiles she lookit round,
An' whiles she kissed his bonny face
A' sightless on the ground.

An' whiles she ca'd him very saftly,
An' whiles she lookit round
To find a leevin' Lord MacDonald,
An' nane leevin' she found.

The Death o' Lord MacDonald. 67

The wee doggies ha' homeward rin
 They're makin' sic a stir,
The Graeme ca's loud his ainly daughter
 An' taks the fright for her.

They gang wi' the wee doggies four,
 Wi' shoutin' an' alarms,
An' find her on the lanely shore
 Wi' the deid lord in her arms.

An' she has gowd, an' she has siller,
 An' londs, an' houses ta',
An' father, an' mither, an' servants, an' suitors,
 An' ponies an' doggies an' a' ;

An' she has pride, an' grace, an' beauty,
 An' mony witchin' charms—
But the ane thought an' the ane memory's
 O' the deid lord in her arms.

LADY GRAEME'S LAMENT.

DEAR, my lover, when death's darin'
Fiercely brak' our divine union,
Wi' a black joy overbearin',
Envious o' love's godlike sharin',
To us a' the love o' heaven
Puirer was than our love given,
Was less sweet than our communion !

When wi' outstretched arms ye waited
For a bliss to crown ye dyin'
That your lovin' had created ;
Though our souls were peers an' mated
To a never-endin' lovin',
An' death waited for my provin'
Tear, or touch, or voice o' cryin' ;

O, my lover, was it wonder
Did transfix me in your dyin' ?
Was there nae mad lovin' under
The great quiet, sune to sunder
Soul an' body wi' despairin'
O' a lanely life's wayfarin',
That I had nae voice for cryin' ?

Had your outstretched arms nae meanin'
For my soul that saw ye lyin'
Waitin' for love's last sweet gleanin'
From my dumb lips overleanin' ?
Whaur was love that it could suffer
This an' death, an' nae love proffer,
Viewin' cauld as death your dyin' ?

Oh, I lo'ed ye, laird, wi' power
Suited to my spirit's fashion,
As I lo'e ye in this hour !
As I shall lo'e o'er an' o'er
Wi' despair o' sic a lovin',
For the grave is as unmovin'
As was I in your death-passion !

Mither o' God, high up in heaven,
Will ye listen to my cryin' ?
Will ye kinder be than leevin'
Human love that had nae greevin',
When its love o' loves looked upward
Wi' a speechless longin', hopeward
To the love denied it dyin' ?

Death, thou end o' a' that's human,
Let nane cry o' Hope still leevin'
In the fu' heart of a' woman
When thou smit'st her in the gloamin',
An' her life an' love are shaken,
An' her heart is slawly breakin' !
Only Thou art worth receivin' !

THE CRYSTAL STANE.

A.D. 1600.

GREY KENNETH took the stane in his hond,
A crystal white as the moon
An' bright as a star, an' a bluid-red drop
I' the middle straikit doun.

Lady MacKenzie smilit fayre :
" Gie me that virtuous stane ! "
" O, gin I gie it awa," quo' he,
" The virtue is a' gane."

Kenneth was but a puir sheppard
Owre the hills a' day ;
Lady MacKenzie ownit the hills,
An' wad hae her ain way.

" Gie it, gie it," she sayde. " I winna'
Gie it to nane," quo' he,
An' he held the white stane up to the licht,
An' 'gan to prophesy.

•

The bluid-red drop i' the middle grew :

“ 'Tis the sheddin' o' bluid,” quo' he,—

“ The sheddin' o' the MacKenzie bluid ;

An ill death sall they dee.”

He held the white stane up to the licht,

It changit brown an' dead :

“ An' these are MacKenzie's londs in sicht,

That nae MacKenzie sall tread.”

He turnit round an' round the stane—

“ An' whaur's the castle ? ” quo' he,

“ I dinna see it aboon the ground ;

An' whaur's the bright monie ? ”

Then Lady MacKenzie grew white an' wan—

“ Grey Kenneth, ye sall dee—

I'll hae the ill-famed crystal stane,

An' break it i' the sea.”

She mixed his porridge sweet and fine,

She gie it daintily.

“ Come hither, come hither, thou wee doggie,

An' try what this may be.”

Drapp't presently the wee doggie
A' sick, an' sair, an' blind.
Grey Kenneth he fled awa', awa',
MacKenzie's men behind.

He reached a loch amang the hills,
O' refuge was there nane:
"Noo sall ye dee, ye crazie sheppard;
Let fa' the crystal stane!"

He throws it i' the shinin' wave
As far as he can throw;
It sparkled sae they couldna' tell
Was it like sun or snow.

"There it sall lie a wee," quo' he,
"Full soon sall it be found
When MacKenzie's castle's gane frae him,
An' a' MacKenzie's ground!"

They pierced him cruel through an' through,
They flung him i' the tide,
An' bluid-red a' the muirlan' grew,
An' a' the sweet loch-side.

That was twa hundred year ago.

MacKenzie's faes sought long

To find the prophesyin' stone

An' bring his name to wrong.

But a vain useless thing it lies

Beneath the loch alone ;

Lang may it lie, lang may MacKenzie

Live by his ain hearthstone !

THE DINGIN' O' THE MINISTER.

NÆ licht or feckless thocht could lurk
Within the wa' o' holy kirk

When the minister was there O ;
He was a holy, holy mon,
An' weel he tell't salvation's plan
In sermon an' in prayer O.

He had a sound an' discreet mind,
He ne'er did flaunt wi' womankind,
But did condemn them sair O ;
A' the sweet lassies i' the town
He punished aye wi' word an' frown
In sermon an' in prayer O.

He dinged the pu'pit to an' frae,
Mair auld he grew, mair wroth his way
To skaith the lassies mair O.

The Black-Haired Lass

THE AT IT WOULD BE THE FIRST TIME
THE ONLY ONE AT THE END
IN SERMON AN' IN PRAYER O.

THE BLACK-HAIRED LASS WAS IN THE
A BARE WIFE A BARE WIFE
AN' AT THE END WAS IN THE
THE BLACK-HAIRED LASS WAS IN THE
AN' AT THE END WAS IN THE
IN SERMON AN' IN PRAYER O.

AN' WHEN SHE WOULD BE IN THE
THE BLACK-HAIRED LASS WAS IN THE
I SEE HER SINNIN' THERE O!
AN' WILL BE JUMPIN' AN' SCRAMBLIN' TO THE TOP,
AN' SCRAMBLIN' AS THROUGH A SPEAKIN' TRAMPEL;
IN SERMON AN' IN PRAYER O!

WHEE! HE SAID O' WANT O' GRACE,
O' JEN'S WILES, AN' WOMAN'S FACE,
THE PREVAILIN' SNARE O.
AN' AYE THE BLACK-HAIRED LASS BELOW
WAS SHOWIN' AFF HER HOND O' SNOW
IN SERMON AN' IN PRAYER O.

The service owre, the minister
Had reachit the lang belt o' fir
 Ayont the daylight's glare O.
He murmurit owre as he went
Wee bitties o' Paul's Testament
 He usit in his prayer O.

There sate the lassie in the way,
Wi' scarlet sark an' kirtle grey,
 An' ankles sma' an' bare O.
Her skin it was as soft as silk,
Her teeth they waur as white as milk,
 The fayrest o' the fayre O.

When she the minister did see
She laughed as she was like to dee,
 An' tossed her flowin' hair O.
He starit at her a' aghaist,
He couldna speak a word, a'maist
 He clean forgot his prayer O.

An' swift the place around grew dark,
An' as he looked the scarlet sark
 Did awfu' flame an' flare O.

It was nae mair the lassie's voice
That laughtit, but a demon boy's
Insultin' sair his prayer O !

The demon boy stretched out his hond
An' garred the minister to stond—
It was the deil's lair O.
“Tak' this,” says he, “an' seek to be
A wiser mon until ye dee !”
An' oh, he beat him sair O !

An' oh, he beat him on the heid,
An' owre the shoulders haird indeed,
An' didna pause nor spare O.
He beat him wi' a malign-joy,
An' happy was that demon-boy,
Stane-deif to ilka prayer O.

The minister rose up at morn
Weak frae the woody bed o' thorn,
A touch he couldna bear O.
An' slow an' slow he walkit hame,
An' whatten has garred the minister lame,
They spier at here an' there O.

The Dingin' o' the Minister.

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An' sin' that unco' awfu' day,
The minister upon the way
 Meets whiles a lassie fayre O.
Be't far or near the belt o' fir
He aye speaks meek an' mild to her,
 An' frown he doesna dare O.

An' prudentlie that holy mon
Has changed a wee salvation's plan—
 To woman gies a share O.
He has a sound an' discreet mind,
An' speaks but guid o' womankind
 In sermon an' in prayer O.

LOCHIE'S AMEND.

A.D. 1505.

AULD SHEILA tould as true as gowd
The fortunes o' the lords ;
You couldna bribe her wi' gowd na' siller,
Na' yet could ye wi' words.

She was na' bonny, na' douce, na' braw,
A hundred year an' mair
She'd been a-creepin' aboot the braes,
Some said she'd aye been there.

Cam' up twa stranger churls ane day
Out of a Lowland toun ;
Ane o' them plucked at her white mutch,
The ither trippit her doun.

An' baith o' them laughed like fou's together.
Cameron o' Lochiel
Cam' stridin' owre the broken heather,
His doggie at his heel.

" Oh, ye sall let the auld dame be,
Cowardly, puir-sauled loons ! "
An' he has beat them wi' his staff,
An' scornit a' their groans.

Auld Sheila scrambled to her feet,
" Laird o' Lochiel," she said,
" Ye see Ben Nevis big an' brown
An' the clouds aboon it spread ?

" Lang as the white, white snaw shall lie
Upon its awfu' side,
Wi' you an' wi' your family
Its londs sall surely bide ! "

An' she has kissed his youthfu' hond,
An' blessed him wi' guid speed ;
An' he has gane up to the court,
Because the king has need.

An' he has gane out to the wars,
An' bravely fought an' weel.
" Noo tak' my thanks," the king spak' free,
" Young Cameron o' Lochiel ;

“ For the guid service thou hast dune,
What sall I gie to thee ? ”

“ Oh, gie the mountain i’ the sun,
If aught thou gie’st to me.”

The king sware deep a royal oath,
“ The mountain thou shalt have.”

Lochiel he took the great mountain,—
Auld Sheila went to her grave.

A hundred year an’ mair passed by.
Cam’ up twa stranger churls :
“ Oh, this is the grave whaur the auld witch lies ! ”
An’ ane a big stane hurls.

An’ ane has took the crucifix
As aff unholy ground ;
Oh, a’ the country wondered sair
When the ill deed was found.

The morrow rose the fiercest sun
That e’er in Scotland rose,
It flashit on Ben Nevis’ top,
An’ piercit thro’ the snows.

“ Gang up, gang up, my guid freends a’,”
Lochiel cried from below ;
“ An’ tak’ the wool, an’ tak’ the flannen,
An’ cover close the snow ! ”

An’ they ha’ gane to the mountain top
An’ owre the mountain side,
An’ closely covered the white snow,
An’ branches hung beside.

Lochiel has gane to the ravisht grave,
An’ he has smoothed it all ;
An’ raised agen the crucifix,
An’ prayed for Sheila’s saul.

An’ at the dreaded hour o’ noon,
The hour they fear the waur,
There was nae mair heat frae the sun
Than ony a day before.

An’ white an’ glitterin’ lay the snow
The mountain side alang ;
An’ the Cameron’s hold o’ Nevis
Was ne’er mair sure an’ strang !

THE BETROTHAL OF EARL FERGUS.

On the moorland, long years gone
Proud Earl Fergus builded fair
Such a palace as the sun
Ne'er before saw moorland wear.

It was all of marb'e white,
Brave with tapestries between ;
Every window held the light
Softly under velvet screen.

It stood high by flowing stream,
It was strong and it was fair,
And the sunlight wandered bright
Up and down the turret stair.

Couches piled with silken stuffs,
Yearned for sweet ladies' limbs ;
Saints and angels on the walls
Looked from out their golden rims.

In the hall the armour gleamed,
Sword and dagger bright at rest ;
Lance and helm all burnished well,
Hung 'neath proud baronial crest.

And the lightsome fountains foamed
White within their marble rounds,
Flashed up to the fair sunlight,
Bubbled fresh with silvery sounds.

And the yellow grain was ripe,
And the Autumn sun was sweet,
And the heather bloomed blood-red
When the palace rose complete.

Then outspake Earl Fergus proudly
To his kinsfolk at the gate,—
“ Like ye the abode where bonny
Bride of mine shall hold her state ?

“ Two score palfreys in the stall,
With a swift obedience steady ;
Two score servants in the hall
Shall be meek and shall be ready

“ When her milk-white hand she waveth ;
Who her pretty will refuseth,
Such my high protection loseth,
And my constant anger braveth.”

Oh, and smiled the kinsfolk smooth,
With meek deprecating air,—

“ ’Tis a noble home, in sooth,
For a winsome lady fair.

“ Swear we knightly strength and duty
To her bidding ere she standeth
Bride in peerless grace and beauty
When the bridegroom bold commandeth !”

Oh, and laughed Earl Fergus then,
Stroking soft his coal-black steed—

“ Thanks, good friends, I rest assured
Well ye’ll prove your words at need.

“ Find me then the bride, and early,
Double thanks for such a boon
I will owe ye should ye fairly
Find her sweet and find her soon.”

Wondering sore his kinsfolk looked
Each to each with straightened brows,—
“Hard it is we should be mocked
For our service and our vows !

“Buildest thou so brave a house,
Such a nest for cooing dove,
Whose stray wings are folded not
In the refuge of thy love ? ”

Then the proud Earl in the midst
Upward standing, straight and tall,
“Heaven be witness,” fervent said he,
“That I mock ye not at all.

“Builded I this palace for her
Whom fate destines to my name—
I shall stoop my eagles o’er her ;
She shall smile to hear my fame.

“Be she high-born dowered lady,
Draped in queenly purple down,
Or the rustic lass whose beauties
Are too fair for russet gown,

“ She shall give me love for love,
Smile for smile and kiss for kiss ;
I will take no doubtful coin—
Counterfeit of wedded bliss !

“ I will wed not where I love not,
She likewise shall love me true.
I will love her, I will prove her,
E'en as base-born bridegrooms do !

“ Till then palace shall stand lonely,—
So I swear by Holy Rood.
Till I bring the bride among ye,
Who shall grace the solitude,

“ There shall be no sound of foot,
Ne'er a living voice shall call ;
Hound and hunter shall be mute,
And palfrey turned from empty stall.

“ Let the grass grow or the weed,
Come the daylight or the dark,
Ne'er a knight shall rein his steed
In the courtyard or the park.

“ Ne’er a pretty page shall dare,
With his airs and graces shown,
And his silver whistle blown,
Lean in joyance on the stair.

“ Quiet all shall be. Bethink ye
When I call for shining gems,
For the emerald and the ruby,
Chains of gold and diadems ;

“ When the snow-white palfrey standeth
Decked around with trappings fine,
Ye shall greet my bridal morning
By the grace of that same sign.”

Smiled they all with one accord,
Half in scorn of every word ;
“ Noble bride for noble creed—
Duty to them both we owe.
“ May Heaven speed our wooings so
As we thy blithesome bridal speed.”

Oh, the autumn sun shone sweet
When the palace rose complete.

But the autumn sun waxed cold,
And the autumn days grew old,
And still desolate it stood,
With the moorland at its feet.

* * * *

Rode the queen home from the chase
With the ladies of her train.
Fast and far they rode apace
In the heavy falling rain.

Spake the queen in frolic mood
To Earl Fergus at her side,—
“Yonder in thy fair abode
Will we rest us from our ride!”

Low the Earl bowed at her rein,
As a loyal knight should do:
“Ne’er a foot hath crossed its door,
’Tis not fit nor fair for you.”

Then the queen, with little frown:
“Not so, lord, we’ll scare thy ghosts
With our feasting and our wine;
We shall be right royal hosts.

“Haste thee then to ope thy doors!”
At her knee he bowed down,
Low he bowed at her rein,
Hiding so his flush and frown!

Oath sworn deep by Holy Rood!
Quick and fast his heart did beat,
For a sov'reign's will withstood
Is a dangerous thing to meet.

And his heart beat quick and fast,
Not a word he answered her.
Thro' his horse's flank the spur
Sharp he struck with desperate haste;

And he turned where palfreys fleet
Bare a laughing, bright-eyed throng,
Where one loveliest lady rode
Many a lovely maid among,—

Lady Margaret, very fair,
With a sparkle in her eyes,
And a bright gold in her hair,
Smiled on him with soft sighs,

Legends of Scotland.

With her rosy lips apart,
And her voice of melodies.
And the douce and winsome sighs
Made sweet music in his heart.

To her side he sped with haste,
Close amid the lovely throng,
Not a moment was to waste,
But the words tript on his tongue.

Though a manly pleading made he,
And she answered, blushing red,
Like a rose some soft wind moveth,
Bowing sweet her graceful head.

And the courtly train swept in
Thro' the palace gates unbarred,
Past the quiet outer ward,
With a rainbow glittering ;
Past the fountains in their rings,
Past the pavement's glistenings.

Many a bonnie lassie brighter
Than the jewels on her breast,
Many a knight, and many a gallant,
Roamed the halls in curious quest ;

Till the dead hall woke amazed,
And the saints upon the wall
Wondered, as they downward gazed,
At the untoward festival.

Then the Earl, with stately mien,
To the Lady Margaret came,
Where she sat in garments green,
With her golden hair aflame ;

And he led her by the hand,
With impassioned reverence mute,
Proudly to the sov'reign's side.
Quick the sudden shouts ring out,—

“Live the bridegroom and the bride ! ”
O'er and o'er they pledged again,
With the smile and with the jest,
In the rattling of the rain.

* * * *

Oh, the old, old story goes,
Men are tricked when women smile :
Hard it is beneath the sun
Love and truth to reconcile !

In the dying afternoon,
In the pauses of the rain,
All the purple-feathered train,
Lovely lady-birds, had flown.

Earl Fergus and young Ronald, each
With a tumult overgrown
And a passion in his speech,
Turned sudden back alone.

Young Ronald owned a shining curl,
A soft, soft curl of golden hair ;
With loving touch upon his breast
A twelvemonth it had rested there.

And he had the fever blood
Of his strong, impulsive youth
Kindling in his eyes, as when
Warm she kissed him on the mouth,

With her "yea, yea," sweetly said,
With her little hands in his,
And her voice of melodies,
And the sunlight on her head.

He, the gentle knight, and poor,
With nor palaces nor lands,
Guerdoned only with the thread
Of gold she gave him with her hands,

Stood up in the courtyard grey,
Clashed with terrible despair
'Gainst Earl Fergus, grimly there
Like a statue in the way.

And the saints waked from repose,
Looking from their golden rims
Down among night's ghostly gleams,
Heard the fierce and deadly blows.

And the palace stood up lonely,
Like a spectre in the night,
And the branches brooding o'er it
Rained their bitter tears before it
With the horror of the sight.

For the twain fell face to face,
Each with competence of pride,

Each a dying in his place,
With the black wounds in his side.

* * * *

Long, long years have come and gone,
Still the Lady Margaret roams,
With her golden hair blown back
In the moonlight as she comes.

And I o'er the moorland roaming
In the hour I love the best,
Hear the ghostly footsteps coming,
On the dewy heather prest ;
Hear the woful, weeping noises,
And the storm of angry voices ;
See the blood upon her breast.

Pray, good friends, her soul to rest,
Pray that she should cease such moving,
And that she, so false in loving,
Soon might know that truth is best !

MURDOCH MACRAE.

A.D. 1746.

CULLODEN MUIR was red wi' blood.
The Highlanders awa'
To Moray Frith or to the woods,
An' black the nicht did fa'.

Murdoch Macrae cam' in wi' letters
Frae Fort Augustus sent ;
He was a servant o' the crown
An' English Parliament.

He was an unco' silly postman,
For up an' down the town
He strutted, an' his clappin' tongue
Wad never be kept down.

An' word was brought to Cumberland,
" The rebel Stuart's spy
Gaes up and down amang the town ;
He suld be hangit high."

Legends of Scotland.

An' Cumberland sware a round oath,

“ High hangit he sall be.”

Not ane of them was mickle loth;

They hanged him presentlie.

Grew i' the street o' Inverness

A Sinclair apple-tree,

As bloomin' an' as fresh as ane

O' that guid name suld be.

They hangit him upon the tree

The whiles he maened aloud,

“ An' hack, an' hack the Hielander ! ”

Shouted the English crowd.

An' as he hangit there they pierced

Him wi' their glitterin' swords ;

An' mickle scoffed at Hielanders

Wi' saucy braggin' words.

Stude by Argyle, wha for King George

Had summonit his clan

Made up o' brawny Campbells,

Hielanders to a man.

An' mony a Scottish regiment
Who battled for the king—
Mair shame for them !—an' yet they couldna'
Bide sic parleyin.'

They drew their daggers in the face
Of a' the slaughterin' crew,
They cut the man doun frae his place,
And poured the High Street through,

Till maist the toun o' Inverness
As fierce a battle saw
As e'en Culloden lookit at
The dreadfu' day before.

But bluidy Cumberland was strang,
To ficht there was nae use,
A'ready the dear cause was gane,
What mair was there to lose ?

So on that day in Inverness
Murdoch Macrae he died,
As mony a braver Hielander
An' better did beside.

Chiel as he was, an' silly man,
Ane thing did dee for him :
The bonnie bloomin' Sinclair tree
Witherit root and limb.

An' ne'er again i' spite o' care,
Come foul weather or fayre,
Come wet season or dry season
Did it ane blossom bear !

Oh, likewise may the Lord's vengeance
On Cumberland be brought ;
A like death may he dee an' his,
For a' the wae he wrought !

THE HEAVENLIE PLEDGE.

A SPIRIT touched me in the twilight hour.

Nae need to ask whose spirit, ainly one
Lo'es me enough to turn frae heaven's power

An' seek the earth because I'm left thereon !
His face was fu' o' licht an' loveliness,

His hond was strong an' faithfu', an' his eyes
Shone into mine to cheer me an' to bless,

An' low he leaned to listen to my cries.
“ O, lover, lover, if thou canst forget

Thy earthlie love sae wonderfully given
For ony heavenlie joy that thou hast met,

Thou art unworthy o' my soul an' heaven ! ”
Oh, when he answered me sae bright he smiled,
He 'maist garred death an' me be reconciled !

“ My ainly love, on earth I put thy face,
Sae fair an' noble to me, in God's place :

In heaven love is better understood,
An' I hae learned to put thee *next* to God ! ”

FINLAY MUNRO.

A.D. 1820.

THEY cam' by hundreds, they cam' by thousands,
The gospel for to hear.
Finlay Munro stude up in his place,
An' preached to the people near.

An' wha was Finlay Munro? A mon
As puir as puir could be;
An' yet he was the Lord's ain prophet,
As presentlie ye sall see.

For God He chooses na' kings, na' queens,
Na' men o' high degree:
Jesus Himsel' was a cairpenter's son,
Despised in His ain countrie.

Finlay Munro stude up an' sayde,—
“The Lord be wi' you a'!”
An' prophesied, an' preached, an' prayed,
Till mony a tear did fa'.

He prayed wi' scores o' weepin' men,
Wi' a great love sincere ;
Till in Dundreggan's lanely glen
The Lord Himsel' drew near.

Then up an' spak' a scoffer lad
Wha wadna' list to grace :
" Noo is it true, or is it false,
A' that the preacher says ?

" I winna fash my heid about
Sic prophesyin' tales."
Oh, sternly then cried Finlay Munro,
" Aye the Lord's truth prevails !

" Whaur noo I stond nae grass sall grow
For generations three.
Oh Lord my God, do Thou this thing
Gif I Thy servant be !

" Barren and bare let it remain
For generations three ;
The sign o' the great covenant
Atwixt Thysel' an' me."

He liftit up his hands to heaven,
An' turnit frae the place ;
An' as he went the people saw
The glory in his face.

An' lo, beneath his feet the heath
Had withered up and gane ;
Whaur till that hour the grass had grown,
After that hour grew nane.

Fifty years hae passed awa,
Finlay Munro is deid ;
But the print o' his broad footsteps twa
The leevin' still may heed.

Gang if ye will Dundreggan down
To whaur the footprints be ;
That Finlay was the Lord's ain prophet
Ye sall maist surely see.

TWA BIRDS IN GLEN URQUHART.

A BIRD sang to anither bird
Aboon my heid ane simmer nicht,
“Hast thou this robber’s music heard,
Wha listens when we come in sicht,
An’ strikes frae ilka note a word ?

“The sang is sweet my birdie bright,
But lov’st thou it, an’ is it meet
That ane suld steal our ain delight,
An’ to an’ fro in house an’ street
Mak’ music that is ours by right ? ”

The ither shook his wings an’ sang
An answer sparklin’ wi’ delight,
That owre my heid fu’ sweetly rang :
“Is ony music ours by right,
When frae our God a’ music sprang ?

“ Oh, I am happy that a soul
Steals near us i' the simmer nicht,
An' finds our singin' beautiful—
A proof, sweetheart, we've kept in sight
O' God ! We birdies, too, when church bells toll,

“ An' men sing wi' the organ peal,
That smites an' flushes thro' the panes
O' tinglin' glass, alight an' feel
Electric songs stir in our veins
That nae notes o' our ain reveal !

“ An' sae 'tis fit that we sing on
Sweeter an' sweeter, for 'tis true
We claim man's music as our own,
An' use it a' the great world thro'.
My sweetheart bright, let us atone !

“ Oh let us, while the night rolls on,
Sweeter an' sweeter sing, because
Ane listens here wha has begun
To search for God in sang, an' soars
Thro' dark, as we do, to the sun ! ”

Twa Birds in Glen Urquhart. 107

Then in the nicht the twa sang out,

Sic' livin' music borne alang

The movin' air, my soul did doubt

Which was the air an' which the sang,

For neither could it live without.

BONNY LADY IF LOVE BE PURE.

BONNY lady, if love be pure,
If love be true, if love be grand,
Accept it, if thy soul is sure
To reach sic lovin' an' understand!

If na', sweet lady, wad ony care
Though souls be little when een are grand?
Oh! beauty like thine is as great an' as rare
As love, an' as mickle to understand!

LORD GORDON'S WEDDIN'.

THERE had been peace a month an' a day

In a' the north countrie.

God wot it was the quietest season

That e'er that lond did see.

The bells rang out as merry as birds.

Gordon o' Gordon's bride

Rode down the street on her way to kirk,

Her braw lover beside.

A chain o' gowd she wore i' her hair,

A chain o' gowd on her neck ;

In a' the lily-white o' her gound

There wasna' spot nor fleck.

“ Noo turn ye, turn ye, ye proud bridegroom ! ”

“ An' wherefore turn suld I ? ”

He howds the ladye by the hond,

An' gayly rideth by.

“Noo turn ye, turn ye, ye proud bridegroom!”

“An’ wherefore turn suld I?”

Mair close he howds the ladye’s sleeve,

Wi’ dark frown at the cry.

It was a frightened varlet

That stude up in the way.

“Noo get ye gane, ye vassal chiel,

I wouldna’ strike this day!”

Cam’ up a score o’ gentlemen

Ridin’ wi’ bitter speed :

“Turn ye, turn ye, my laird o’ Gordon,

Sair an’ great is our need !

“Sax kempie clans are at the gate,

Wi’ mony an’ Englishman !”

The red bluid rose in Gordon’s brow

An’ flushit back agen.

“Fareweel, fareweel, my lily ladye,

I maun turn backward there ;

Gie me ane fareweel token true,

A lock o’ ye’re gowden hair.”

Lord Gordon's Weddin'.

III

The lily-white bride is alane in her bower :

“ O mither, mither,” saith she,

Gaes Gordon to the tramplin' fields

Or to the gate frae me ? ”

“ To the great gate, my fairest daughter,

Wi' a' his mudie clan :

“ 'Mang freends an' faes an' Englishmen

He's aye the bravest man ! ”

'Tis lang, lang past the midnight hour,

She's kaimed her yellow hair,

An' to the great gate flies alane

To meet Lord Gordon there.

It is a nicht as dark as the grave,

An' lily-white is she.

Wha sees her flittin' by, ca's God

To help, an' sweet Marie.

Gordon o' Gordon frae the wa'

Looks aff upon the foe,

An' down across the city street,

An' sees the white gownd's flow.

“ Noo wha is that daur come sae near ?

Cry, ‘ Stand ! ’ my kempie men.”

But the mist white thing cam’ near an’ nearer

An’ heed it wouldna’ then.

Lord Gordon liftit his faithfu’ bow,

An’ fast the arrow flew,

A flame o’ light frae the battlement,

That pierced the white gownd thro’.

He laught loud : “ We hae hushed the ghaist—

A traitor ghaist maybe.

Gang doun, gang doun, twa trusty men,

An’ see what is to see.”

An’ ane has ta’en her i’ his arms

An’ brought her to the wa’,

An’ sobbit sair when by the licht

The lily-white bride he saw.

“ Approach, approach, wha greets sae sair

An’ loud ? ” Lord Gordon said.

Ane lays her at Lord Gordon’s feet,

An’ turns awa’ his head.

The morrow is the battle day,

Wha fiercest fights an' dies ?

Gordon o' Gordon, wha meets his ladye

At the great gate o' the skies.

*OH WHATTEN FOUND I WHEN I CAM'
HAME?*

Oh, whatten found I when I cam' hame,
Owre the sea frae a far countrie,
Wi' a heart as light as the saut-sea faem?
Mickle I smilit when I cam' hame
To see the hills grow roun' my heid—
I smilit an' smilit—when I got there
My darlin' was deid.

I had wi' me a gowden kaim,
A chain o' beads a' yellow wi' gowd,
A wee gowd ring when I cam' hame,
An' as mickle monie as honds could howd.
I brak' the chain an' the gowden kaim,
I burit the ring aboon her heid.
An' whatten's the use o' monie mair?
My darlin's deid.

A PICTURE RESTS UPON MY HEART.

A PICTURE rests upon my heart,
An' wonderfu' dreams the twa rehearse,
Day an' night they are ne'er apart,
An' each to the ither's the universe.

'Tis a face o' ane wha's gane to the grave,
An' that's a lanely journey! I know
That he grieves because o' the grief I have,
That his soul is racked in its cruel bed,
That he's as weary o' bein' dead
As I am weary o' leevin' so!

An' he cries to me wi' despairin' cry,
"Canst thou, my darlin', leeve sae lang?
Oh, tak' death's journey an' fear na', I
Am waitin' for thee the dew's amang!"

I hear him cry—in its hidden place
I kiss in my woe the pictured face.
My soul sobs owre it for reply
"The Lord's na' willin' to let me die!"



PART II.

Thoir air ais an tseann aitean !

Bring back the old, old places !



Pl. 3.



Vincent Brooks Dreyer

GULF OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HIGHLANDS.

WHAT lineage need they, the proud Highlanders,
Sprung from the rocks, like their own hardy heath ?
They have for brethren, sons, and ancestors,
The skies and mountains, rocks and glens beneath :
The wildernesses and the sleeping moors ;
The dark lakes softly gathered up between
The rugged hills ; the pines and birches green ;
The storm that darkens and the wind that roars !
They own the patent of nobility
God gave them when from cloud-tossed skies He bent
To bless them to proud race and pedigree,
To chivalrous, magnificent descent.
A race they are nurtured as heaven meant
To nurture those it destines to be free !

CULLODEN.

FROM red Culloden's unkempt boundaries
I see the sullen sunlight disappear
Behind the dark clouds hanging in the skies,
Like banners drooping desolately here,
Above the field where a wild legion lies.

How cold the wind that strikes us, and how bleak
The straggling fir trees in their meagre dress!
Lonely they rise, like ghosts that yearn to speak,
And melancholy is their dumb distress.
They beckon to the air,—what is't they seek?

Oh, do they see across the stricken moor
The scarlet warriors flaming to the fight,
And brutal Cumberland press on before,
A chief remembered in this Highland height
With curse less cruel than the sword he bore?

See they the stalwart hosts of Highlanders
From the dark mountains and the northern seas,
Each with a pibroch melody that stirs
The others' hearts, pour onward till the breeze
Cries victories among the quaking firs ?

See they the clans with daggers fierce and true
Who loved Prince Charlie and who saved him when
The proud MacDonalds sullenly withdrew,
Avenging monstrously a transient pain
With vengeance worthier the Saxon crew ?

O, ghostly firs of bloody memories,
Are you still listening for the troops to come,
Have you not waked yet from the sharp surprise
That smote you desolate and left you dumb,
That you look up so wildly to the skies ?

And oh, you melancholy heap of stone,
That struggle on for symmetry, and yet
Are type and witness of the drear day gone,
You, broken in the wilderness, are set
A thing for winds and rains to weep upon !

I have the Highland music in my heart—

The sweet proud music with its voice that knows
How fully to express what but in part

From other nations' best of music flows,
Yet now, sweet music, powerless thou art !

Though in my veins beats the same Highland blood,

And in my heart the faith that blood believed,
O barren moor, where my forefathers stood,

And vainly died of treacherous wounds received,
I cannot sing you fitly though I would !

Oh, past and gone, oh, dead beyond recall

The dear old cause they fought for ! Better days
Have dawned, of comfort and of festival !

In ballads only and in gentle lays
The romance of the blue-eyed Prince's fall

Moves softly, vague as a departed dream.

But here, alas ! the sombre truth appears,
And mercilessly in the crimson stream

Of waning sunlight reckons up the tears
We sing of with such fanciful esteem !

A few drear trenches where the heather blooms
And frantic rocks are scattered, mark the spot
Where dead men lie, the gathering-place of tombs
Arresting us, that will not be forgot ;
And round about a cloud of fir trees looms.

Oh, wild and woful are the histories
That wander thro' the Highlands in the air,
That e'en the royal Guelph repeats with eyes
O'erbrimmed with noble pity ! everywhere
From moor to moor they mournfully arise.

A sleeping infant* in its cradle lay,
In a fair cottage in a Highland glen,
When hopeless closed Culloden's dreary day.
Flashed by triumphantly the Englishmen
With full authority to burn and slay,

And speedily the mountains were beset.
A soldier into the still cottage strode,
And pierced the child thro' with his bayonet,
And tossed it lightly in a hazel-wood
Dying or dead. Her children repeat yet

* The great-grandmother of the writer.

The story—how she died not in the wood,
But, spite of tender age, and wound and fright,
Stubborn lived on as Highland baby should,
Bearing unto her grave a red scar's sight
Crossing her side with memories of blood.

Thou wild Culloden, though thou'lt never be
A lovely thing with brightness in thy face,
Like yon green field that blossoms to the sea,
Whom winds and waves tumultuously embrace,
I love thee more than many a lovelier place !

I love the firs whose pitiful array
No other tree invades or interrupts ;
The old stone tower, the brown and broken way
Thro' heather that no tamer flower corrupts ;
And most the records of thy fierce-fought day.

NEAR BEN NEVIS.

WHEN souls are conscious of affinity
With God, what noble evidence appears
And in the sight of all men high uprears
Great promises perfected gloriously
And hallowed by the consecration deep
Of all their powers to the Power they see
Enthroned within them ? Can a spirit sleep
That so adores and sees ? O God, that we,
To whom the mountains bend to lift us up
And hold us fast with an undying hope,
Should live nor ever prove our soul's degree,
As though the heavenly kinship were not ours !
O poor, unvirtuous humility,
O degradation this of life's best powers !

II.

Great mountains are interpreters of God,
They bear His high commission to the heart :
To give them place the reverent heavens part
Grandly in twain, as though an angel stood
Before them with his bright, imperial eyes,
So used to sight of God they have drawn down
Thro' their calm depths a splendour not their own.
Like such are lofty mountains when they rise
Tranquil to God, who sends them forth to teach
Angelic things beyond all lower speech.
And like an angel's is their influence,
High, heavenward wishes throng about their feet ;
They are a benediction and defence ;
Their teaching we may live but ne'er repeat !

IN PLOCKTON.

A WILD, blue sea traversed by furious winds ;
Dark islands to the stormy surface blown ;
Rough coasts where heather stains the swarthy stone.
Beating upon the rocks fierce rain begins ;
A willow group low in the valley spins
And reels and dances like a demon thing.
Masses of mountains, gloomy at the base,
With silvery sides and tops of misty gold,
Magnificently gathered in their place,
Rise girt about with splendour manifold ;
Enchanted skies thrown vast and glittering
Above the winds and rains that rush below.
Horizons where the rainbows to and fro
Pass over clouds of darkness and of snow.

GLEN MORISTON.

A STRETCH of sky all black and threatening,
And opposite a sky as bright as gold ;
A mountain where the burning rowans cling,
Half lit with life, half shadowy and cold.
Beneath two rugged lines of rock, that hold
Atwixt them a wild river, hurled along
With all its foaming life-blood poured among
The sombre stones whereon leans heather bold,
Whose crimson palms, dipped reckless in the stream,
Can hardly struggle to the shore again.
Oak trees and laurels wand'ring down the glen ;
In all the air a pale bewildered gleam
Of sunlight moving lonely through a haze
Of rain, whose measured music fills the days.

BY MORISTON RIVER.

THERE is a place in wild Glen Moriston
That having seen I never shall forget.
There run tumultuous waters black as jet,
Fleeing from contact with the living sun,
Fierce striking as they fly the rocks they shun.
Beside them in the darkness, weird and lone,
An ancient place of sepulchre remains,
That feels but heeds not the wild hurricanes
That blast the living things they fall upon.

Among the broad-leaved ferns that gather dense
And dark, it resteth by the river side,
O'erbrimmed with strange, enduring monuments,—
The rugged witnesses of Highland pride,
Whose stainless life is its own best defence.
The peasant, when death strikes him earthward, laughs
At mourning meaningless, world mockeries
Of headstones, numbers, names and epitaphs :
He will have naught but heaven when he dies.

When graves are filled, solemn and still thereon
Each mourner places a memorial stone,
Drinks to the memory of the comrades gone,
Cries " Beannachd lidh " for parting ! One by one,
Where the bleak waters thro' the forest pour,
Rise, in the darkness on the lonely shore,
For death-remembrance these rude heaps of stone,
Nameless, untended, yet expressing more
Than sweeter nurtured graves the sun shines on.

None ever come as to our peaceful homes
Of burial to grace with tears the dead :
Nature, with noble mien and solemn tread,
Is supreme mourner till the judgment looms
They watch for o'er the mountains, and God comes !
Meantime, sound, music, from the flying stream,
A wail of mourning gather as it goes
From waves tossed black on rocks whose dark cheeks teem
With undried tears, while wildly the wind blows !

Sound, music ! Shall the minstrel rose and all
Its sister nurslings make thy spirit burn
To strength sublime and sway imperial
As does the moss, the heather and the fern,
The birches sobbing thro' the pines hung stern

And dark above the river, where the vines
Of daring honeysuckle climb and swing
With rosy fingers clasped about the pines,
In all the place the one frail, pliant thing ?

Sound, music ! Shall the dead sleep mutely on,
Invisible, estranged, when thou and I
Come to their place of meeting with a stone
For every cairn, with prayer, and song and sigh,
With “ shlainte ” to their souls cried fervently ?
Waiting for judgment are they ? No, ah, no !
In glens thrice beauteous where the heather shines
Like stars, where honeysuckle like the snow
Clings soft among sublimer-towering pines ;

Across superber mountains, wilder streams,
Thro' lights and shadows infinite and strange
They to the sound of pibroch-music range ;
And when they sleep, thro' heavenlier moonlight gleams
Strathspeys and marches mingle with their dreams.
Why should they not come back then at our call ?
We too bring pibroch march, and flying reel
And rhythmical strathspey—the souls that feel
Such music's meaning should make festival !

There is no reason why they should be dumb,
There is no need to hold them far removed !
O blissful house of God, O near, sweet home
Where live and breathe beside us our beloved,
Who says thou'rt shadowy, vague, unreal, disproved ? .
Thou art as near us as our wishes be,
There's no division possible of souls
Save *will* alone, that conquers and controls
Not time alone, but immortality !

The dead, the dead, they follow us thro' the world :
Of all life's treasures none so sweet as this !
I said it over when to darkness hurled
From supreme joy, and counted it for bliss.
Who would be happier and such glory miss ?
But oh ! the human longings that demand,
In spite of heaven, a presence tangible,
A tear, a smile, a glance, an outstretched hand,
A word, no matter what so it be real,

They never may be hushed—dear heaven forbid !
For in their solitude and bleak despair
More than in blest companionship is hid
A gift of God, a jewel sweet and rare
That they who suffer soonest own and wear.

Give me the suffering then, dear God ! No sweet
Delicious pleasures that youth's hope-time knows
Are necessary now, or loved like those
That fall with sobs of anguish at Thy feet !

O solemn sorrow, whom we cannot bless
Nor praise, well dost thou teach invisibly
And visibly worth of world's happiness !
The joy that might have been, that shall not be,
The love supreme that's lord of memory,
Gain spiritual strength to lead us forth
From the first darkness their existence gave.
Enough that strength for those to whom the earth
Hath nothing left to offer but a grave !

Heaven hath so much the soul is scarce bereft.
Turn, life, again to occupations sweet—
Who shall despair and die with heaven left,
With love therein, life's throne and mercy-seat ?
'Twere shame to deem such living incomplete !
See, how the night is falling everywhere !
Yonder above the trees at heaven's gate,
Like wasted hermits, standing brown and bare
And desolate, great sunless mountains wait !

Below, the river and the sepulchre,
Yea, even the crimson heather-moor, wear shrouds
Of mist blown softly from the starless clouds :
Not even a silver-footed dream may stir :
The noiseless night moves where the breezes were.
Colour and sound are lying dark and still
Save for the one-arched bridge thrown white across
The air, and for the river's passionate thrill.
One is content, in such an hour, with loss.





Unconformity Day 1900

DUNSTAPPAH.

DUNSTAFFNAGE CASTLE.

BROKEN Dunstaffnage by the western sea,
Thou art as dark as any old misdeed
Committed in thy lonely towers could be !
Thou'rt like a life too gloomy to succeed,
That preys upon itself and dies of need.
Yet thou wert born in History's early dawn,
Of warlike race and brood, a stately thing
Created strong and fearless to adorn
The vales that wooed thee for thy sheltering.
To-day what valley of them all takes heed
Of thee ? They smile and dance beneath the corn—
E'en the great ocean flaunts thee with its scorn !
Now hath a new-born babe more power than thou,
For it hath life—thine perished long ago.

II.

And yet, Dunstaffnage, I should do thee wrong,
Thou, who hast held great Scotland in amaze,
To image piteous these later days
And leave thy glorious memories unsung !
Within thee when the Christian world was young,
Twelve centuries ago, fame's minstrels sang,
Whisper thy name and victory's bugles rang !
Great kings anointed here with blast of song,
With trumpets blowing and with clash of spears
Knelt to the patriarch of their royal years,
The holy stone,* that Scone deprived thee of
When first men ceased to fear thee and to love !
Thou great Dunstaffnage, though we cannot save
Thy life, we may at least revere thy grave !

* Coronation-stone of the kings of Scotland, taken from Iona to Dunstaffnage, thence to Scone, and last to Westminster Abbey, where it has been for six hundred years.

BY THE RIVER DEE.

I WANDER by thy banks, dark river Dee,
And watch the tumult of thy hurrying tide ;
At rest and happy thou wilt never be
Till thou hast broke thy bondage and rolled wide
On to the distant hope that haunteth thee,
Thro' shock of joy that sets thy spirit free.

More thou would'st know, or misery or bliss,
Reckless thou fliest onward with a wail
Of longing for that higher consciousness
Wherein thy noblest music shall prevail.
Yet even now thy hopes, though bruised and torn,
Do not faint weakly 'neath the pangs they mourn.

Oh, thou art to the brave of heart akin,
And they to thee ! Sobs are no coward sign,
And spirits with deep weight of grief within
Must sometimes overflow and wail like thine.
There are degrees of grief—so all men say
Till they have felt real grief and its vast sway.

A soul that suffers will it not cry wild
To God or man, whichever nearest be ?
Can it to pale submission be beguiled,
When fast and far its hope's best destiny
Falls to destruction, and alone it goes
Thro' depths where a great darkness overflows,

And sun and stars, and clouds and skies, and days
And nights alike are meaningless and naught,
And speech goes wandering thro' uncertain ways,
And life resolves itself into one thought
That, could it last, would ruin heart and brain
Too feebly-fashioned for such stress of pain ?

Some griefs are cold as death, and still—mine own
Breaks over such in passion and in tears
As the sea breaks across the silent stone,—
But sea and stone in mighty depth are peers !
Oh, how may souls immersed in deadly night
Reach up again to the unfaltering light ?

I would not, with ill-timed religious zeal,
Prate of the power the dear God sends down
To ease a mortal anguish, though I feel
It were ungrateful dumbly to disown

The treasure of His comforting—the load
Is always lighter when 'tis shared with God !

Thro' lonely years the comfort may not come ;
And often when it comes it gleams awhile
Then goes, as though it hasted to flee from
A grief too great e'en for the Father's smile !
Often the night is longer than the day,
Yet even a gleam of sunshine cheers the way.

I talk of comfort, multiplying words !
Yet well I know, O God, the hopeless time
When the dark angels smiting with their swords
Strike heaven from the heart, and words sublime
Match meagrely with death. Stillness were best :
When God takes all, what words can give us rest ?

Oh, we must bear, if so be we die not,
And life becomes a strange and mystic thing
Wherein all else is lived down and forgot
Save love, whose proof is the remembering !
And loving saves us even from our grief,
Bringing beneficent its own relief.

By it the stricken soul is worthier,
Freed from temptation with a sudden strength
Of motives grand ; though weak its deeds appear,
The deeds redeemed will triumph too at length ;
And life will take a glory from the thought
That love approves, although it answers not !

What goodness from such loving may not grow ?
Ye great hearts, capable of memory,
Keep it unstained and strong where'er ye go ;
Do ye no deed the absent might not see ;
Think ye no thought the absent might not know !
They never loved at all who love not so !

I wander by thy banks, dark river Dee,
The winding of thy waters gleams afar
Among the braes that lift their heads to see
Above them the white peaks of Loch-na-gar.
The moonlight trembles thro' thee to the land—
Oh, God is near, or else were earth less grand !

HARDMOOR.

*The traditional meeting-place of Macbeth and Banquo with the
weird sisters.*

O MIGHTY MASTER, who shall tread this heath
Without mysterious visions—looking back
To see the witches dancing on his track
With shrivelled limbs, and voice and eyes of death ?
They beckon with their palsied hands beneath
The stunted trees, their torn locks shake among
The dropping branches. Thin and black along
The shivering grass the heather holds its breath
For fear, and cannot burn and blossom when
Night after night such awful sights it sees ;
The wan, worn moonlight fainting on the trees,
And life struck dumb till daylight breathes again !
And even the daylight is bewildered here
Where all things have such consciousness of fear.

FALLS OF LORA.—A DREAM OF OSSIAN.

FALLS of Lora, from the darkness of thy banks
I see a great king's spirit moving thro' the air.
His sword is like a glittering sunbeam. Ghostly ranks
Of warrior souls from woody Morven, with the spear
Blood-red, and with the dark-brown shield, and with the hair
Of streaming gold, follow him from afar. I hear
The stormy clouds roll fierce along the blue-faced sky.
O, falls of Lora, hast thou sight or memory ?

Who cometh like the rushing of the winds, to hear
With joy thy swan's voice 'mong the moving reeds ? To see
Thy snowy breast, soft as a cloud the moon desires,
Lying upon the sea ? Whose dreadful battle-fires
Flash down upon thee from the mountains with red blaze
Of light that smites with fear his foes ? Fingal, the king !
The dew of youth is on his forehead, all his days
Are strong, his arm and sword shine like the eagle's wing ;

The wind is in his yellow hair, the ocean's roar
And Morven's angry gales are music to him ! Straight
He is, like the tall tree at Selma's mossy gate,
And white-browed like the waves that ripple to the shore.
Hast thou forgotten Fingal, Lora ? Did the bard
Sing sweet of him to sing thee to sweet rest
And sing in vain ? Dark Morven's sides are battle-scarred
With tread of bloody days—a maiden with white breast

Dreams in her narrow home of Fingal. Lora, what of
thee,

The fairy moonlight softly perched upon thy crest,
Departing with thy snowy plumage to the sea ?
Thou sing'st no dirge, thou wear'st no mourning on thy
breast !

O, blue-eyed king, back to the shadows go ! Thy ghost
Should no more wander over Lora's gleaming shore,
She sighs no more for thee and thy tumultuous host,
She waves no more her milk-white hand : thy reign is o'er !

But find'st thou in the shades no royal recompense,
No sweeter Lora where thou dipp'st thy purple crest,
No mist of battle-smoke to woo thy wild soul hence
Far o'er the spreading fields of mighty dreams ?—No rest

In moonlit caves among sweet waters, where repose
Maidens with glittering hair, and breasts of snow, and eyes
Like starlight, and white hands? Are there no gathering
foes

Who shake at thee the gleaming spear beneath red skies?

My soul were heavy for thee, Fingal, did I not
See in the air thy warrior hosts with souls like thine
Bearing thee company. On their dun shields they float,
And the great bard among them strikes his harp divine.
Their nostrils pour the joy of battle; Ossion's song
Crosses the darkening winds: no need to grieve for thee,
Great king of Morven, thou art jubilant and strong,
No mightier shade than thine e'er roamed death's silent
sea!

NIGHT IN GLEN SHEE.

God sends the moonlight down upon this glen,
Bequeathing it as earthly father might
A name unstained and pure before all men.
The clouds are rolled together in the light,
The stars, the heath, and all the air are white
And wondrous where the solemn moon has been.
Oh, should Messiah walk the earth again,
Surely He would draw near on such a night !
Match ye, my heart, the moonlight's holy peace !
What though thy frailties thrive, thy sins increase,
Thou'rt God-ordained to be the nobler thing !
O, moonlight, shrive me while thou'rt wandering,
Divide my life from me when I am shriven,
Or wound me no more with such glimpse of heaven !

*TOMNAHURICH.**

HERE 'neath the hazels fairies used to lurk,
Their eerie fingers pointing thro' the grass ;
And ghosts arose for their unholy work,
And many a stricken peasant saw them pass
Before the starlight came, just in the murk
Of gloaming, when the silence from the dew
Rose in its mystic garments, ghostlike too.
Then what of pistols sure, and shining dirk,
And brawny Highland strength and voice of storm,
When every shadow held a dreadful form
Of evil spirit hateful to the sight,
With eye of mystery and touch of blight ?
I trow the pride of proudest mountaineer
Was feebler in the darkness than his fear !

* The hill of the fairies.

IN KENMORE.—YELLOW PRIMROSES.

BONNIE wee flowers, I saw ye growin'
Along the banks o' Tay,
Shakin' your yellow locks and blowin'
The robber bees away.
And haudin' up your heads, and glowin'
Wi' pleasure o' the day.

I met ye, a' too proud for humblin'
An' winsome in your pride,
Where three white cataracts are tumblin'
Adown the mountain side,
Amang torn rocks an' larch trees crumblin',
The heather bloom beside.

An' then again I saw ye noddin'
Across the churchyard green,
A lang, sweet simmer day forebodin'
Wi' joyous, sparklin' een ;

An' wi' a flush o' sweetness loadin'
The winds that waved between.

Where'er I went I heard ye speakin'
A language that I knew,
By ilka bloomin' roadside shakin'
Your saft feet in the dew.
How mony hearts this day are breakin'
For sic a sight o' you !

DRYBURGH ABBEY.

I TURNED from the steep winding road
Into a fragrant path that leads
'Mid soft, green fields, and dewy meads,
And grey walls slumbering 'neath a load
Of rowans fallen from the tree
And ivies heaped luxuriantly.

I saw the birches in the air
With all their silvery garments on,
White as the robes a bride might wear!
And larches swinging in the sun,
And sycamores of stately size,
And yews of mournful memories.

Behind, the Eildon hills recede
Into a distance vague and high ;
Close at my feet the river Tweed
Rolls all day long to watch the sky,

Sharing its majesty and gloom
And peace—the river's noble doom.

Beyond, where jewelled orchards be,
With fruit of sunlight laden round,
A ruin falling silently
Leans with its calm face to the ground.
It hath no fear of death, its soul
For ever will be beautiful.

What though the body fall to dust,
The spirit—high immortal thing!—
Is faithful to its deathless trust,
In power untrammelled glorying.
When stones and shrines shall disappear
That power still shall triumph here!

And here a human soul leans down
The heavenly, invisible air,
With eyes once used to earthly sun,
And voice uplifted with a rare
Expression—Scotland's minstrel he,
Born to be king of melody!

For zeal, and taste and power were his,
Imagination's rapturous fire
Kindled them into melodies,
And high ambition's proud desire
Made each in turn the instrument
Of a sagacious will's intent.

His bones lie in St. Mary's aisle,
Where they have lain for many a year ;
Here pilgrims dream or talk or smile,
And some indeed, all mute, revere.
No tomb of knight or lady is
Remembered and beloved like his.

And Dryburgh holds high in the air
A delicate rose-window, framed
In tracery profuse and rare.
For sweet St. Catherine sweetly named.
A hundred feet the ivy springs
To cluster round its dainty wings.

A yew-tree stands beneath the wall,
And many a ling'ring century thro',
At funeral and at festival,
The shrouded monks passed on below ;

And many a night of many a year,
Kings with their armies rested here.

The second Edward, all too weak
To conquer Scotland with his sword,
Took fire instead, to better wreak
His wrath, and flying on toward
The borders, burnt with impious hand
Of hate the churches of the land.

As each by each in turn became
The victim of his lawlessness,
Their towers and arches wrapped in flame
Cried to the Lord in sore distress
Against the fierce blaspheming hate
That fain would ruin Church and State.

But Dryburgh, this Dryburgh,
Was all too beautiful to die ;
Though fire and sword have pierced it thro'
Ne'er shall regretful dreamer lie
Upon its grave—for it is strong
With life, in story and in song !

Ne'er shall the grey walls be o'erthrown,
Ne'er shall the arches be laid low,
A fragment brown of altar-stone,
With holy letters, aye shall show
To all the pilgrims of the place
Man's need and heaven's abiding grace.

This is my spirit's prophecy :
Though time would wreck it, God shall save !
'Tis sacred to long memory,
And to a noble poet's grave.
To learn of both with reverent mind
Shall aye be precious to mankind.

CULBIN.

'**TWIXT** level Forres and old Elgin town,
Upon the seashore, is a stretch of sand
Floating upon the ocean and the land ;
For land and ocean both heave up and down,
And struggle to possess what neither own.
How had this place the mighty heaven annoyed ?—
For what ungodly deed was it destroyed ?
Lo, blooming there was once a cheerful town,
Where soft sea breezes o'er the housetops blew,
And fruits and flowers in the gardens grew.
But desolation in the whirlwind came
And swept a storm of sand up from the sea,
And buried it from sight and memory :
Nothing to-day remaineth but a name.

THE NATIVE GLEN.

WHEN one of Highland blood comes to the glen
He straightway learns—O knowledge unforeseen !—
That all his cousins are who dwell therein.
Babes, boys and girls, young women and old men,
The peasant in his cot, the minister
In ivy covered manse in churchyard shade ;
The laird in the old mansion house ; the maid
Who sweeps the inn with pretty smile and stir ;
The ancient fisherman who drinks all day ;
The farmer leaning by the garden wall ;
The keeper with his leash ; the gentlemen
Who, decked in dashing plaids of red and grey,
Go striding with great paces down the glen.
Even the dogs claim kinship—best of all !

THE END.

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